

2011
DEKALB COUNTY, ILLINOIS
UNIFIED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted: May 18, 2011
DeKalb County, IL Ordinance 2011-05

DeKalb County has long recognized the need to plan for the future growth and development that will occur in the County, having adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1972. With that first plan, and the subsequent updates over the years, the County also worked closely with the municipalities within its borders, recognizing that the growth and development decisions of the cities affect the unincorporated County and vice-versa. This cooperative approach was employed with the 1981, 1991, and 2000 Comprehensive Plans, and particularly the 2003 DeKalb County Unified Comprehensive Plan.

The 2003 Unified Comprehensive Plan recognized that the County's long-held policies would help assure that the vast majority of the growth and development that would take place in the future would continue to occur nearly exclusively within and immediately adjacent to the municipalities in the County. The DeKalb County Board also recognized the need for increased communication, coordination and cooperation between the municipalities in the County, and between those municipalities and the County itself, in the face of increasing development pressures if the region as a whole was to adequately respond to and accommodate the consequences of growth and development.

In an effort to respond to this increasing need, the County Board worked with the village boards and city councils of the municipalities within its borders to create the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC). The RPC is composed of one representative from the County and from each of the fourteen municipalities that are entirely or partially within the County, and serves as a forum where issues of consequence to the County as a whole can be discussed and common policies and responses drafted. The RPC was initiated in April, 2002 via intergovernmental agreements between the County and each of the participating municipalities.

The first task undertaken by the RPC was the development of the 2003 Unified Comprehensive Plan. The intent of the Unified Comprehensive Plan was to combine the comprehensive plans of each of the municipalities with that of unincorporated DeKalb County, thus creating a uniform and coordinated vision for the future of the region as a whole. In order for the Unified Comprehensive Plan to be effective, it was further recognized that the individual comprehensive plans of the municipalities would need to be up-to-date. The County Board, acknowledging that the future of the County as a region largely lay with the municipalities, but also understanding that many of the smaller communities lacked the means to update their comprehensive plans, allocated funds to hire a planning consultant to work with each of the communities to update their individual comprehensive plans. The stand-alone municipal plans that resulted from that effort were then combined with the County's plan to create the 2003 Unified Comprehensive Plan for DeKalb County. The Plan was more than an update of the preceding plans for unincorporated DeKalb County; it was a synthesis of the planning jurisdictions of the municipalities and the County, and constituted a common vision and approach to management of growth and development across the jurisdictional borders. The common core community values regarding development in DeKalb

County that emerged during the planning process were intertwined with the County's goals and objectives, thereby reaffirming the County's land use policies and practices.

In the time since the DeKalb County Board adopted the 2003 Unified Comprehensive Plan, planners, County staff, and elected and appointed officials have undertaken on-going efforts to implement the Plan's recommendations and turn the adopted Goals and Objectives into reality. The RPC has continued to meet regularly to discuss issues and options related to subjects and problems that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Several municipalities have updated their municipal comprehensive plans since 2003 as growth needs, economic realities, and community attitudes have changed. In particular, communities have scaled back growth projections in the light of the recession that began in 2007.

The County also acknowledged that the vision for the future of unincorporated DeKalb County set forth in the 2003 Unified Comprehensive Plan needed to be re-visited in the light of changes in the subsequent years. To this end, the County undertook a simplified Comprehensive Plan update process in 2010. Anticipating continued support for the general goals of preserving prime agricultural land for agriculture while encouraging non-agricultural growth and development to occur within and adjacent to municipal boundaries, the Unified Future Land Use Plan was amended to show the revised municipal future land use plans, without altering the plans for rural portions of the County outside the municipal planning jurisdictions. The goals and objectives were updated to strengthen the County's historic land use management approach and to reflect newly-arisen areas of concern such as stormwater management and ground water planning. Open houses were held to solicit public input on the updated Future Land Use Plan and Goals and Objectives, and that feedback was evaluated in developing a final draft of the updated Unified Comprehensive Plan. The updated Plan was then the subject of a public hearing before it was presented to the County Board for adoption.

As with the 2000 and 2003 Comprehensive Plans, this Unified Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the Chicago metropolitan area will continue to be the major engine of non-agricultural growth in DeKalb County. Much of the attention of this Plan, therefore, is in terms of impact rather than statistical forecast. The reason for this approach stems from the way in which forecasts or projections are made. Generally, projections are based on past trends or knowledge of certain specific factors that will influence growth. In DeKalb County, past trends would not be able to predict increases in population and development associated with growth pressures from the Chicago area. The influence and degree of impact associated with non-agricultural growth in DeKalb County will be a result of factors generated outside the immediate boundaries of the County. As the cost of building homes or commercial structures in Kane and other counties to the east increases, DeKalb County will continue to be looked on as an affordable option. This process has been on-going for several years, and will likely continue to be a part of the future of the County and the municipalities within it.

The exact time when growth occurs is not the key issue. The key issue is that DeKalb County is a region where non-agricultural growth is expected to occur and foresight is needed to anticipate the

problems associated with growth. To do so, the appropriate policies and planning process must be in place to address growth when it occurs. This Unified Comprehensive Plan confronts these issues at both the municipal and County level, and provides a basis for the policies that will guide land use decisions in DeKalb County in the future.

INTRODUCTION

This Plan represents an update to the 2003 DeKalb County Unified Comprehensive Plan, and was developed prior to the release of the 2010 Census of Population. Much of the history, regional setting, and geography of the area has been outlined in previous Comprehensive Plans. In the chapters that follow, information from previous documents has been integrated into this Plan and a review of recent developments has been added. The following sections provide a brief history of the region and describe the location of DeKalb County.

The DeKalb County Board adopted this Plan on May 18, 2011, by Ordinance 2011-05. The Plan has an effective date of May 18, 2011.

History

Permanent settlement of DeKalb County began in the 1830s. The rich soils of the eastern prairie provided the early settlers of the region with a valuable asset from which to earn a living. The relationship between the land and the residents of DeKalb County has continued to strengthen since that time.

The industrial development of the area also originated in the 19th century. The wire manufacturing industry, fostered by the invention of barbed wire by Joseph Glidden, was a major producer and employer in the region until the Great Depression.

The turn of the century saw other significant changes in the development of the County. In 1895 Northern Illinois State Normal School opened. The school, which has since been renamed Northern Illinois University (NIU), has grown to accommodate an annual enrollment of approximately 25,000 students, and is the County's largest employer.

The early 20th century saw the development of the agriculture sector into an organized, research-oriented industry. The DeKalb County Farm Bureau, which was the first farm bureau in the nation, and DeKalb Agricultural Research were established during this time. The Farm Bureau continues to represent and advance farming interests at the County level, while DeKalb Agriculture, which became a major seed research and production company, was purchased by Monsanto Corporation in 1998.

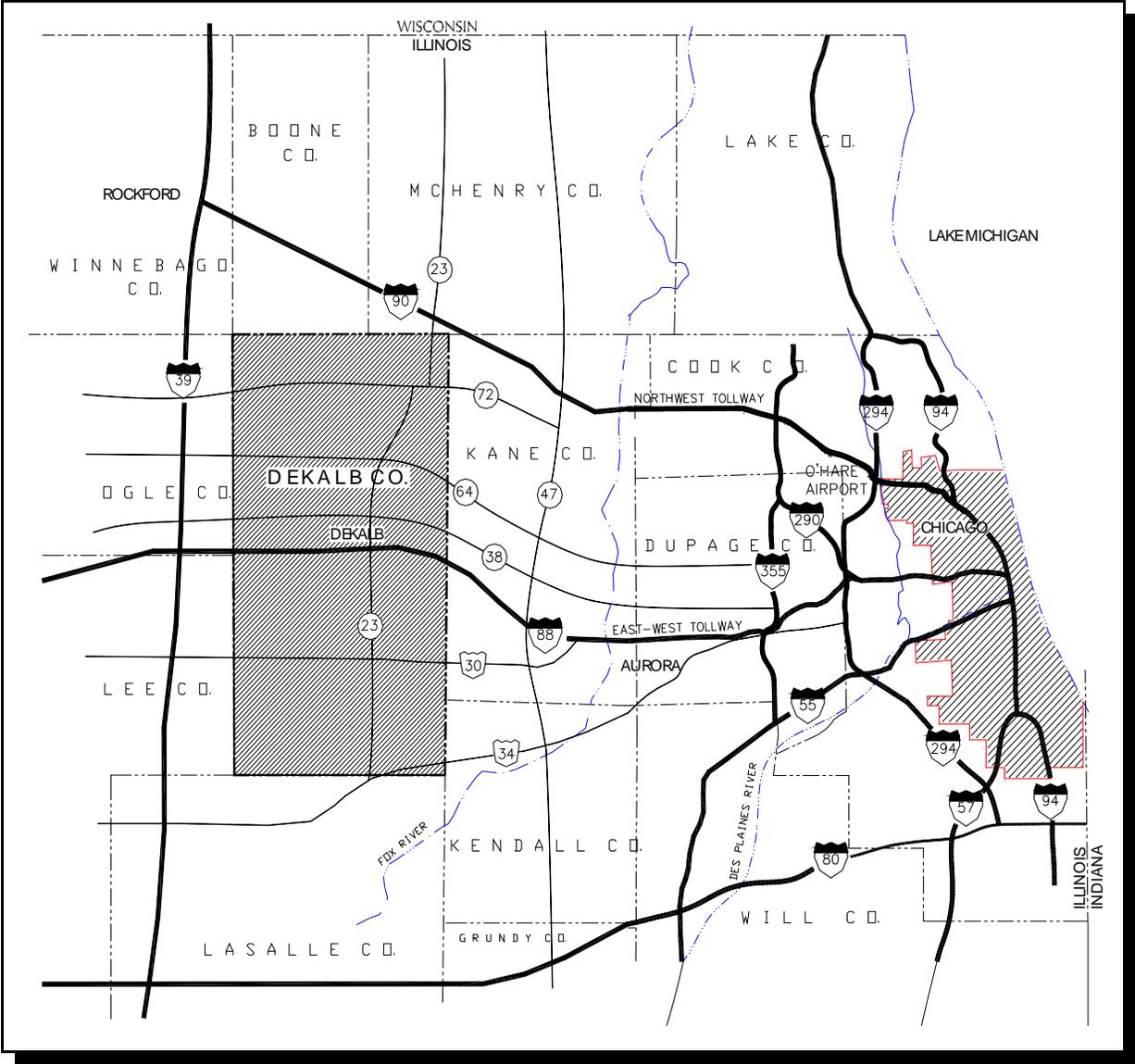
The era between 1940 and 1970 saw significant growth in the County's population and a steady diversification of the regional industrial base. Between 1970 and 1990 population growth slowed, and development leveled off after a peak in the early 1990s. The rate of population growth increased again between 1990 and 2010, even as development significantly slowed in DeKalb County, as in the rest of the nation, during the economic recession that began in 2007. The consequences for the County from this latest economic downturn are still unfolding.

Regional Setting and Influences

DeKalb County is located on the western edge of the Chicago metropolitan region and the southeastern edge of the Rockford urban area. The County is part of a regional transportation network that connects Rockford, Chicago, north-central Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin. The close proximity to Chicago is key to the County's future, because Chicago and its suburbs provide commercial markets and employment opportunities within a short commuting distance. In addition, Rockford has the potential to provide limited economic benefits to the County. However, the Rockford area is structured on a much smaller economic base than Chicago, and experienced a significant downturn during the 1980s, from which it is slowly recovering.

The size and layout of the County is rectangular, with the north/south dimension 36 miles long and the east/west dimension 18 miles wide. The County is bordered by LaSalle County to the south, Ogle and Lee Counties to the west, Boone and McHenry Counties to the north, and Kane and Kendall Counties to the east. The County contains approximately 636 square miles (406,151 acres) and is comprised of 19 Townships. The eastern border of DeKalb County is located approximately 50 miles from Lake Michigan (see Figure 1). This proximity ties the County geographically and economically to Chicago and the growth of its metropolitan area. A substantial portion of the growth during the 1990s and the early 2000s in the Chicago region was centered around communities in the Fox River valley, such as Aurora, St. Charles, Elgin, Oswego and Yorkville, all of which are within 20 miles of DeKalb County. Such growth pressures are likely to be experienced again in DeKalb County in the future.

Figure 1
Regional Location Map



PLANNING ISSUES

An analysis of current conditions is essential as the basis for planning decisions for the future growth and development in DeKalb County. The following is a brief overview of the demographic and general physical conditions that currently exist within the County.

Population Growth Trends

The population of DeKalb County more than doubled in size from 1930 to 1970. During the next four decades, however, the rate of population growth was slightly under half that of the previous 40 years, as DeKalb County grew by 47% between 1970 and 2010 (see Table 1).

This Unified Comprehensive Plan was drafted before the full results of the 2010 decennial census were published. However, long-term trends show a modest rate of population growth in the County. An increase of nearly 35% from 1990 to 2010, as compared to the 4% annual growth rates in each of the previous two decades, is indicative of a gradual upward trend in population growth. This growth is anticipated to have substantially tapered off in the past two years, however, since the global economic recession that started in 2007.

Regardless, the historic land development trends in the three counties to the east suggest that DeKalb County may yet experience a greater rate of growth in the next 30 years than was the case between 1970 and 2010.

Table 1. DeKalb County Population (1930 - 2010)

Years	Population	Population Change	% Change per Decade
1930	32,644		
1940	34,388	1,724	5%
1950	40,781	6,393	19%
1960	51,714	10,933	27%
1970	71,654	19,940	39%
1980	74,754	3,100	4%
1990	77,932	3,178	4%
2000	88,969	11,037	14%
2010	105,160	16,191	18%
1930 - 1970		39,010	120%
1970 - 2010		33,506	47%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Regional Growth Trends

Located 50 miles west of Chicago and less than 20 miles from the communities in the western Chicago metro area, DeKalb County is subject to market pressures from the suburban counties to the east. Municipalities such as Schaumburg (in Cook County), Naperville (in DuPage County) and Aurora (in DuPage and Kane Counties) are major employment centers in the western Chicago metropolitan region, and are within easy commuting distance of communities in eastern DeKalb County. The City of Rockford is a secondary source of market and employment. Today, many of the residents from Sandwich, Hinckley, DeKalb, Sycamore and Genoa currently commute to jobs in one of the communities in Kane, DuPage and Cook Counties.

Historically, the growth pressures from the three eastern counties have not been significant in causing DeKalb communities to grow rapidly. Census data show that the communities in DeKalb County have grown only by small increments in the last three decades. The economic recession that began in 2007 has had a noticeable impact on land value and the jobs market, significantly slowing and in many cases halting development. It is anticipated, however, that when the national economy heats up again, the historic growth pressures from the east will once more be felt in DeKalb County. If the land that remains available for development in the eastern counties becomes increasingly scarce and commuting costs remain affordable, DeKalb communities will see greater growth pressure. Reflecting the trend of people living in DeKalb County and commuting to the eastern counties, an expected market response would be to build more housing within commuting distance of the job centers to the east.

If the demand for residential opportunities within DeKalb County increases, there will be increasing pressures to build new large and small residential projects throughout the County. The growing population of the County will create viable market opportunities for more retail uses and local employment, further increasing the demand for new and more diverse development.

Employment Trends in DeKalb County

DeKalb County is predominantly an agricultural county in that the majority of its land is used for farming. However, the agricultural employment base in the County reflects a very low percentage of total jobs. Since 2000, farming and related jobs have represented less than 3% of all the jobs in the County (see Table 2).

DeKalb County's primary employer is Northern Illinois University, with 3,450 full-time employees, and another 1,300 part-time employees. Combined with the large presence of the University, State and local governments employ over 13,500 persons in the County, which represents an increase of over 15% over the 2000 government employment of 11,600. Government jobs are not traditionally included in employment demographics, but the presence of the University cannot be discounted in evaluating the job situation in DeKalb County.

Since 1990, the number of jobs in the service sector has grown; by 2010, service-related jobs exceeded government to become the largest sector in DeKalb County. This is consistent with the broader, national trend toward a service-based economy. Retail and manufacturing jobs, which have traditionally been a strong minority, have tapered off in the past decade. This is at least in part a consequence of the recession that began in 2007. It can be reasonably anticipated that the number of jobs in these sectors will increase when the economy recovers.

Table 2: DeKalb County Employment by Industry (Percent) 1990 - 2010

Industry Type	1990	2000	2010
Farming	3.5%	2.8%	2.1%
Ag. Services/Forest/ Fishing	1.3%	1.5%	0.4%
Mining	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Construction	4.4%	5.6%	5.7%
Manufacturing	17%	14.1%	9.4%
Transportation/ Utilities	2.7%	2.5%	2.5%
Wholesale Trade	2.6%	2.2%	2.7%
Retail Trade	15.5%	16.9%	11.4%
F.I.R.E.*	5.0%	6.5%	6.5%
Services	20.4%	23.4%	33.2%
Government	27.3%	24.4%	25.9%
Total # Jobs	40,366	47,890	53,072

* FIRE: Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate

Source: Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies

The total number of jobs in the County increased by 11% between 2000 and 2010 (see Table 3). This is below the 18% rate of increase in the decade between 1990 and 2000. The reduction in the rate of agricultural jobs is more stark in the recent decade, with only 68 jobs added. This is indicative of a continuing trend of consolidation of farms and increased automation of farming activities.

Examining the two-decades-long growth from 1990 to 2010, both the total and non-farm jobs in the County increased by 31%. Although the County had a net loss of more than 10,000 jobs between

1980 and 2000, the job gains in the 1990s and the early 2000s demonstrated that DeKalb County is attractive for non-farm job creation during good economic conditions for the Chicago Metropolitan Region.

Table 3: Change in DeKalb County Private Sector Employment (1990 - 2010)

	1990	2000	2010	1990-00 Change	2000-10 Change	1990-10 Change	1990-00 % Change	2000-10 % Change	1990-10 % Change
Total Non-Farm Employment	39,585	46,834	51,948	7,249	5,114	12,363	18%	11%	31%
Total Farm-Related Employment	781	1,056	1,124	275	68	343	35%	6%	44%
Total Employment	40,366	47,890	53,072	7,524	5,182	12,706	19%	11%	31%

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security and DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation

Employment by Industry

Reflecting the historic distribution of non-agricultural employment exceeding agricultural jobs, the vast majority of the employed civilian population, or workforce, in DeKalb County holds non-farming jobs. In fact, despite the predominance of agriculture in the landscape and the importance of agriculture to the local economy and character of the communities, farming employment continues to shrink in the County. As previously noted, this phenomenon is not unique to DeKalb County, and reflects the impact of increased automation and consolidation of farming operations throughout the country.

Within the non-farming industries, the County workforce was predominately employed in the government and service sectors from 2000 to 2010 (see Table 4). In particular during that period, the number of people with service jobs increased substantially, by nearly 60%. However, in the same period, the manufacturing, transportation & utilities, and retail trade sectors experienced the greatest percentage decreases: by 26%, 12% and 25% respectively. Recovery in these and the other employment sectors will be affected by the duration and changes wrought by the global recession that began in 2007.

Table 4: Employed DeKalb County Population by Industry (2000 - 2010)

Industry Type	2000	2010	2000-2010 Change	% Change
Farming	1,340	1,124	-216	-16%
Ag. Services/Forest/Fishing	718	199	-519	-72%
Mining	95	96	+1	1%
Construction	2,681	3,017	+336	13%
Manufacturing	6,752	4,971	-1,781	-26%
Transportation/Utilities	1,197	1,343	+146	-12%
Wholesale Trade	1,053	1,450	+397	38%
Retail Trade	8,093	6,054	-2,039	-25%
F.I.R.E.	3,112	3,458	+346	11%
Services	11,206	17,629	+6,423	57%
Government	11,685	13,731	+2,046	18%
Total	47,890	53,072	+5,071	11%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Service

Employed Civilian Population by Occupation

The last decade has seen only a small amount of change in the types of occupations in which DeKalb County's work force is employed (see Table 5). Approximately 63% of the DeKalb County's employed population work as Management/Professionals or in Sales/Office occupations, which represents a 3% increase over what existed in the year 2000. Other fields saw slight decreases in the percentage of people working in those areas, though the overall number employed in each of these fields increased. The one notable exception being the Farming/Forestry/Fishing field, already occupying less than 1% of the employed population in the year 2000, saw its numbers shrink again.

Table 5: Employed DeKalb County Civilian Population by Occupation (2000-2010)

Occupation	2000	% of 2000	2010	% of 2010	Change	% Change
Farming, Forestry, & Fishing	244	<1%	214	<1%	(30)	(12)%
Management, Professional & Related	15,020	33%	20,630	37%	5,610	37%
Services	6,919	15%	7,612	14%	693	10%
Sales and Office Occupations	12,225	27%	14,555	26%	2,330	19%
Construction, Extraction, & Maintenance	4,384	10%	5,090	9%	706	16%
Production, Transportation, & Material Movement	7,117	16%	7,764	14%	647	9%
Total	45,909	100%	55,865	100%	9,956	22%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Service

Work Trips

Employment opportunities in the region will be the single most important factor influencing development in DeKalb County in the future. Historically, people tended to migrate and settle near employment opportunities. The highway network in northern Illinois permitted people to settle farther from areas of employment, as long as the travel to work is convenient and efficient. DeKalb County is a part of the Chicago Metropolitan area. However, the integration of the County's economy into the greater regional area has been uneven. The past development trends in the more urbanized counties east of DeKalb County resulted in significant residential growth within DeKalb County, with many of the new residents commuting eastward. Commercial developers were slower to expand into DeKalb County, due to perceptions by those developers that DeKalb County was too far west. However, the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) reported that certain local industries, such as the health and the warehousing/distribution sectors, did see notable growth during this period.

The past 10 years have seen significant changes in the economic realities of the region. The result has been a dispersal of places of employment across the region, a loss of jobs in traditional employment centers, and the forcing of many people to travel much further and to have to look farther afield for viable employment opportunities. Additionally, the DCEDC has noted DeKalb County has seen many new companies founded by business and service professionals who live in

DeKalb County, but who have lost their former jobs at companies located in the Counties to the east. These companies are primarily web-based work styles, located mostly in home offices. These developments bear directly on DeKalb County.

Work Trips from DeKalb County

Almost half of all work trips from DeKalb County end within the County itself (see Table 6). However, of the remaining work trips that originated in DeKalb County and ended outside the County, 32% went to Kane County, 17% had destinations in Cook County and 14% ended in DuPage County. Winnebago County was the destination for 6%, and Kendall County 5%, of the work trips starting in DeKalb County. This data is a possible indicator of future work patterns for DeKalb County. Past development trends within Kane and DuPage Counties had indicated that DeKalb County was likely to become a supplier of housing for a significant portion of the labor force in those Counties. However, the changing economic realities, both within the County and in the surrounding counties, have shown a significant shift in these trends since the year 2000.

The previous decade saw the majority of work trips originating in DeKalb County as ending in DeKalb County, with Kane and DuPage Counties being the primary outside destinations. However, by the year 2008, the total number of work trips originating and ending in DeKalb County went down by almost half (see Table 7), a significant decrease. Although Kane and DuPage Counties saw small increases, the greatest increases in numbers of work trips between 2000 and 2008 were in Winnebago and Cook Counties, with Kendall County seeing a small decrease. Most significant, however, was that the number of Year 2008 work trips made outside of DeKalb County to locations other than the five mentioned above increased by 165%. This suggests a trend where not only are even greater numbers of DeKalb County residents traveling outside the County for work, but that they are having to travel further and more directions than ever before to find work.

Table 6: Work Trips from DeKalb County (2010)

Destination County	Number of Work Trips from DeKalb County	% of Total Trips	% of Total Outside Trips	Cook, Dupage, Kane as % of Total Outside Trips
DeKalb	16,993	42%	--	63% (14,791 out of 23,631 trips)
Cook	3,925	10%	17%	
DuPage	3,314	8%	14%	
Kane	7,552	19%	32%	
Kendall	1,064	3%	5%	
Winnebago	1,395	3%	6%	
Other Locations	6,381	16%	27%	
Total Trips	40,624	100%		
Total Outside Trips	23,631		100%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LED OnTheMap Origin-Destination Database 2008 and DCEDC Economic Profile for DeKalb County

Table 7: Comparison of Work Trips from DeKalb County (2000 - 2008)

Destination County	Number of Work Trips from DeKalb County 2000	% of Total 2000 Outside Trips	Number of Work Trips from DeKalb County 2008	% of Total 2008 Outside Trips	Change in Trips: 2000 to 2008	% Change from 2000
DeKalb	28,811	N/A	16,993	N/A	(11,818)	(41)%
Cook	2,221	14%	3,925	17%	1,704	77%
DuPage	2,857	18%	3,314	14%	457	16%
Kane	6,468	40%	7,552	32%	1,084	17%
Winnebago	779	5%	1,395	6%	616	79%
Kendall	1,263	8%	1,064	5%	(199)	(16)%
Other Locations	2,411	15%	6,381	27%	3,970	165%
Total Outside Trips	15,999	100%	23,631	100%	7,632	48%
Total Trips	44,810		40,624		(4,186)	(9)%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LED OnTheMap Origin-Destination Database 2008 and DCEDC Economic Profile for DeKalb County

Work Trips to DeKalb County

DeKalb County also serves as a destination for employees from surrounding counties, with the largest numbers of work trips coming in are from Cook, Kane, Ogle, LaSalle and DuPage Counties (see Table 8). However, a dramatic change has occurred since the Year 2000. Previously, over three-quarters of the work trips to DeKalb were generated within DeKalb County itself. The year 2008 saw the number of work trips beginning and ending within DeKalb County decrease by almost half, down to just about half of all the work trips to DeKalb County. Additionally, where the workers are coming from has also significantly changed. Ogle and LaSalle Counties, formerly the second and third largest generators of work trips to DeKalb County, both saw decreases in the number work trips they generated, whereas Cook, McHenry, and Will Counties produced major increases in the number of work trips to DeKalb County. The eight counties immediately adjacent to DeKalb County (Boone, Kane, Kendall, LaSalle, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, and Winnebago) had previously accounted for over 80% of all work trips coming to DeKalb County from other locations. This amount has decreased to only about half of all work trips to DeKalb County. This data suggests that the County, and the municipalities within it, may wish to concentrate on increasing jobs within the County to offset the increase in the net export of workers to other counties.

Table 8: Comparison of Work Trips to DeKalb County (2000 - 2008)

County of Origin for Work Trips	Number of Work Trips 2000	% of All Work Trips 2000	Number of Work Trips 2008	% of All Work Trips 2008	Change in Trips: 2000 to 2008	% Change from 2000
Boone	434	1.2%	311	1.0%	(123)	(28)%
Cook	826	2.2%	2,116	6.7%	1,290	156%
DeKalb	28,811	76.9%	16,993	53.5%	(11,818)	(41)%
Dupage	560	1.5%	1,047	3.3%	487	87%
Kane	1,311	3.5%	2,067	6.5%	756	58%
Kendall	725	1.9%	858	2.7%	133	18%
Lasalle	1,369	3.7%	1,174	3.7%	(195)	(14)%
Lee	557	1.5%	682	2.1%	125	22%
McHenry	202	0.5%	700	2.2%	498	247%
Ogle	1,558	4.2%	1,266	4.0%	(292)	(19)%
Will	149	0.4%	691	2.2%	542	364%
Winnebago	636	1.7%	972	3.1%	336	53%
Other	371	1.0%	2,880	9.1%	2,509	676%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LED OnTheMap Origin-Destination Database 2008 and DCEDC Economic Profile for DeKalb County

Existing Land Uses in DeKalb County

Agriculture is the predominant land use in DeKalb County consisting mainly of harvested cropland. Approximately 88% of the County's land was dedicated to production in 2010 (see Table 9). The total cropland in DeKalb County comes to 356,635 acres, as reported by the DeKalb County Assessor's Office from the 2009 tax assessments.

More than 65% of the land in the County that is in non-farm use is under the jurisdiction of the 14 municipalities. The combined area of the incorporated communities, however, accounts for only 6% of the total land area in the county. This is a 1% increase from the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. Although 6% is a small amount of the County's total land area there has been a measurable amount of growth by the municipalities within the last seven years.

If "open space" is omitted from the unincorporated non-farm land area, the resulting "urbanized area" outside the jurisdiction of the municipalities accounts for only 1% of the County's land area. However, of the 5,402 acres of "urbanized lands" outside of the municipalities, residential land use accounts for 82% of the total. This unincorporated residential development was primarily approved by the County prior to 1993. Since that year, the County has discouraged residential development in the unincorporated areas of the County.

Table 9: DeKalb County Land Use Distribution (2010)

Land Uses	Acres	% of Incorporated + Non-Farm	% of Total
Unincorporated Residential	4,415	11.4%	
Unincorp. Commercial	544	2.5%	
Unincorp. Institutional (civic)	443		
Unincorp. Open Space (woods, lakes, parks)	7,969	20.5%	
Sub-Total Unincorporated Non-farm	13,371	34.4%	
Sub-Total Incorporated	25,454	65.6%	
Total Incorporated +Unincorporated Non-farm	38,825	100%	9%
Road Right-of-Ways	10,691		3%
Agricultural Cropland	356,635		88%
Total Land	406,151		100%

Source: DeKalb County Information Management Office, Assessor Office, and County Zoning Maps

Residential land use in unincorporated areas of the County are primarily single family dwellings. Generally the subdivisions platted prior to 1993 that continue to be built out, but the total unincorporated land area devoted to existing or future residential use does not exceed 1%. Farm homes continue to be included as part of the agricultural areas. It should be noted, however, that an increasing number of these homes are owned separately from the surrounding farm fields and are utilized primarily as residential properties.

Also characteristic of DeKalb County are several small unincorporated communities found throughout the County. Communities such as Fairdale, Elva, Esmond, and Shabbona Grove generally contain less than 50 people and are predominately residential in character and use.

Multiple family land use is relatively scarce. There are a few apartment buildings near Northern Illinois University. Mobile home parks are located on the east end of Sycamore, and the south end of Cortland. There are also a few scattered and isolated attached single-family dwellings.

DeKalb's County's natural features are very diverse with fertile soils, many rivers, creeks, lakes, prairies, wetlands, and wooded areas. Among the County's largest conservation areas Shabbona Lake State Park and the Kishwaukee River State Fish and Wildlife Area. These two parks contain approximately 2,100 acres. In addition, there are ten forest preserves scattered throughout the County, as well as prairies and woodlands. Woodlands are located throughout the County predominantly along the Kishwaukee River and smaller creeks. Rivers provide a natural resource for agricultural, residential, commercial and recreational land uses, and all of which can be found along the banks of the rivers and creeks. In addition to the forest preserves, the County also has several "sportsmans clubs," which are gun clubs (and one archery club) that utilize the natural and rural setting.

There are a significant number of land uses in unincorporated DeKalb County that are not row crop or livestock production but are appropriate given the predominantly agricultural nature of the region. "Agribusinesses" that support agriculture by providing seeds, fertilizer, and fuel are located on properties throughout the rural area. A new land use in the agricultural region is a commercial wind farm that was approved by the County Board in 2009 and has been constructed in parts of Milan, Afton, Clinton and Shabbona Townships.

There are also two operating quarries in the County; one north of Sycamore along the South Branch of the Kishwaukee River, and one northeast of Cortland along the East Branch of the Kishwaukee River. These quarries are in close proximity to railroad lines. Commercial uses in the form of small, home-based or stand-alone businesses are scattered throughout the County. Some of these operate out of existing farm buildings that are no longer used for agriculture, such as landscaping businesses, dog kennels, public stables, etc. Commercial land uses in the County are usually located on primary or secondary arterials. There are several private turf airstrips in the County, the largest of which is located on the north side of Rt. 30 just west of Hinckley. In addition, there are a few commercial uses located just outside of DeKalb and Sycamore, including a florist, shopping plaza, hobby shop, and garden center.

Industrial uses, such as a trucking company and other light industry facilities, are located just outside of DeKalb and Hinckley. However there are few other industrial uses within the unincorporated area of the County.

There are many public/institutional uses in the County. One of the largest public uses is Kishwaukee Community College, located northwest of Malta. The College was founded in 1968 and serves a district of over 800 square miles and has an enrollment of approximately 5,000 students each semester. Another well known public use in the County is the Sandwich Fairgrounds, which covers more than 160 acres. Many events are held on the property throughout the year, including a monthly Antique Market. The largest event is the Sandwich Fair held annually the Wednesday through Sunday after Labor Day in September; this major county fair draws well over 200,000 visitors. The County has two hospitals, one located on unincorporated property between the cities of DeKalb and Sycamore, and the other within the City of Sandwich. There are also several churches and cemeteries scattered throughout the County.

Building Activity in DeKalb County

In the decade between 1990 and 2000, 1,620 building permits constituting 2,349 dwelling units were issued by DeKalb County and its constituent municipalities (see Table 10). This is an average of 234 units per year. In 2009 there were 130 new units built within the entire County. Single family residential development has declined due to dramatic changes in the economic environment. This decline is apparent in Table 10 when comparing the 1,459 new units constructed in 2005 to the 130 units in 2009.

Table 10: All DeKalb County Residential Building Permits (1990-2009)

Units	1 Unit Bldg.		2-Unit Bldg.		3-4 Unit Bldg.		5+ Unit Bldg.		All Units	
Year	# Bldgs.	# Units	# Bldgs.	# Units	# Bldgs.	# Units	# Bldgs.	# Units	# Bldgs	# Units
1990	535	535	17	34	6	22	16	248	574	839
1995	528	528	94	188	14	52	22	178	658	946
2000	348	348	16	32	1	4	23	180	388	564
2005	1135	1135	2	4	30	118	27	202	1194	1459
2009	109	109	0	0	1	4	3	17	113	130

Table 11: Change in Number of DeKalb County Dwelling Units Approved (1990-2009)

	Total Units	Change	% Change
1990	839		
1995	946	107	13%
2000	564	(382)	(40%)
2005	1459	895	158%
2009	130	(1329)	(91%)
Avg.	788		

There continues to be commercial investment in DeKalb County; since 2003 a new hospital and the wind farm were constructed, various private facilities and warehouses were expanded within the municipalities, and improvements were made to the Kishwaukee Community College campus.

Communication Infrastructure

The County authorized in 2010 the construction of a 140-mile fiberoptic network that will link each of the 14 municipalities entirely or partially located within its boundaries. This improvement will provide internet and cable access at lower cost to citizens, businesses and local governments. The installation of this network may facilitate and encourage land use development, and the County and municipalities should recognize this possibility and plan accordingly so that the development is compatible with other land use goals and objectives.

Farms and Farm Size

Farm size and number in the County has changed dramatically in the past three decades. Between 1969 and 2007, the year of the last Census of Agriculture, the number of farms dropped from 1,438 to 930, and the average size of those farms rose from 270 to 399 acres (see Table 11). The increase in farm size is largely due to advances in farming technology and the increased use of larger and more efficient machinery. In addition, as farming becomes more mechanized, smaller farms are aggregated in order to realize the benefits associated with economies of scale. These trends can also be seen at the State and national levels, and will likely continue as technology improves and the business of farming demands greater financial resources. By 2007 the US Census of Agriculture reported a growth in the number of farms from previous years and a slight decrease in the average size. The 2007 data may be early evidence of a stabilization in average farm size in DeKalb County.

Table 12: Agricultural Land and Farm Size in DeKalb County (1969 - 2007)

Year	Number of Farms	Total Area in Farms (Acres)	Change in Farm Acreage	% Change	Average Acreage of Farms
1969	1,438	383,103			270
1974	1,248	378,114	(11,536)	(3%)	303
1978	1,216	390,685	12,571	3%	321
1982	1,150	395,767	5,082	1%	344
1987	1,063	384,277	(11,490)	(3%)	362
1992	942	377,512	(6,765)	(2%)	401
1997	828	368,076	(9,436)	(2%)	445
2002	816	359,352	(8,724)	(2%)	440
2007	930	370,772	11,420	3%	399

Source: USDA, National Agricultural Statistic Service, "2007 US Census of Agriculture - County Data"

The 370,772 acres of farm land, as defined by the Census Bureau, represents more than 90 percent of the total land in the County (this figure includes all agricultural land, not just crop land as shown in Table 9 above). The fluctuation of the amount of land devoted to farming results when land is removed from production and possibly reintroduced at a later date, or conversion to farming of land that was previously considered non-productive. Conversion of portions of this acreage to urban uses must be considered as a contributor to the reduction in farm acreage in the County.

Physical Features

Topography

Much of the land comprising DeKalb County is flat or slightly rolling. This feature is a result of years of glacial movement across the great plains of the northern United States. The highest elevation in the County is 977 feet above sea level. This point is located in the western portion of the County near the intersection of Tower and McGirr Roads. The lowest point in the County is at 645 feet above sea level, where Somonauk Creek crosses the County line in the southeastern section of the County. The elevation generally ranges between 700 and 950 feet. In 2009, the County generated digital two-foot contour interval maps for the region. This information was integrated into the County's Geographical Information System (GIS) as a layer of data. This important information allows a better assessment of existing conditions with respect to topography and stormwater drainage, as well as better evaluation of proposed developments and public projects that require grading.

Soils

Accompanying the flat topography of the County are the rich soils that are the source of the well established farming economy of the area. Approximately 98 percent of the soils within the County are classified as prime, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service. The Soil Survey maps exist as a layer of information on the County GIS maps, while soil descriptions are set forth in the Soil Survey for DeKalb County. This information is important for assessing the suitability of soils for proposed developments, as well as for protection from development.

Flood Plains and Drainage

DeKalb County typically receives between 35" and 48" of rain fall each year. The combination of flat land and rich fertile soils in DeKalb County creates drainage issues. Substantial flooding has a possibility of occurring every year, with the most recent severe flooding taking place in 2007 and 2008. The major drainage channel for the northern half of the County is the South Branch of the Kishwaukee River. The southern half of the County is drained by several small tributaries which flow into the Fox River. Associated with these natural drainage patterns are several floodplains which pose threats for existing land uses and possible problems for future development. These flood prone areas are generally associated with narrow bands of low lying land located near the Kishwaukee River and several smaller creeks. The official regulatory floodplain maps for all of DeKalb County are in digital format, created in 2007 by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). This information exists as a layer of information on the County GIS system and is important for understanding existing flood-prone areas as well as evaluating proposed land uses.

The County has also delineated watersheds throughout its territory as yet another layer of information on the GIS system. This data allows drainage issues to be evaluated in a broader context, including whether or not a proposed stormwater management facility is necessary or desirable on a given piece property. The watershed information is available to be used both by owners of existing land uses and potential developers in assessing stormwater drainage patterns and possible solutions.

Ground Water

The known sources of drinking water in DeKalb County are two aquifers. The St. Charles is a large aquifer that underlies much of northern Illinois and is relied on not only by DeKalb communities but by many western Chicago suburbs. A large portion of the recharge area for this aquifer is DeKalb County. The Troy Bedrock Valley is a more shallow, regionalized aquifer in the western third of the County, and is primarily recharged in DeKalb, Ogle, and Winnebago Counties. The actual size, perimeters, and capacities of these aquifers are unknown. The need for water planning, given the growth projections for Chicago and northern Illinois in the next 50 years and the State of Illinois and Federal laws regarding water rights, is great. The availability of water not just for

drinking but for certain industrial and agricultural processes is a key concern for any long-range plan.

Wetlands

There are numerous wetlands in low areas throughout DeKalb County. These are inventoried on the County GIS maps as a layer of information. In some cases wetlands have been delineated (the limits established by on-site investigation); in others they are designated based on soil types or simply depicted based on aerial photography. These wetlands serve a valuable function in enhancing water quality and providing storage areas during flooding events. Protection and enhancement of the wetlands is an important task for environmental as well as economic and social reasons.

Wooded Lands

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture data, DeKalb County's inventory of existing stands of timber is significantly lower than other areas of Illinois. In the 1987 Illinois Forest Resources report, DeKalb County was listed as having 5,300 acres of forest land. This acreage accounts for only 1.2 percent of the total land area of the County. Forest land, as described by the Department of Agriculture, is "land at least 16.7 percent stocked by forest trees of any size, or formerly having had such tree cover, and not currently developed for non-forest use. The minimum area for classification of forest land is one acre. Roadside, streamside, and shelterbelt strips of timber must have crown width of at least 120 feet to qualify as forest land." The limited forested areas of the County are a reflection of the agricultural dominance of the County's land usage.

Natural Areas

According to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, DeKalb County contains one publically held nature preserve, the Wilkinson-Renwick Marsh. This preserve is located west of Annie Glidden Road north of Illinois Route 64, approximately five miles north of the City of DeKalb. This medium quality marsh is one of the very few undisturbed marshes remaining in the Grand Prairie Section. It is a large prairie depression which was large enough to escape being tilled and converted to farmland. Emergent native vegetation surrounding an area of open water is predominantly two species of cattails with sandbar willow along the margins of the open water. The marsh provides resting habitat for migrating waterfowl and over 115 species of birds have been documented for this area. The nature preserve also includes an ongoing prairie restoration bordering Annie Glidden Road.

Information from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources indicates that DeKalb County also contains two privately held natural areas. Neither are protected by the owner or lessee. The Afton Cemetery Prairie is a grade B Mesic prairie, located on Perry Road between the Union Pacific Railroad rail line and Waterman Road. An outstanding example of a ring mound is also found on private land, southwest of the intersection of Nelson and Twombly Roads.

Summary of Planning Issues

DeKalb County remains primarily an agricultural county, with 90% of its area still devoted to farming uses. Of the developed land in the County, less than one-half is under the jurisdiction of the 14 communities in the County. The rest is in residential development in unincorporated DeKalb County. The pace of issuing building permits for new residential constructions in the County as a whole has reduced in the past ten years, and particularly in the past two. Whether or not this trend continues in the years to come bears monitoring.

The greatest influence on growth and development in DeKalb County has come from the east, from Chicago and its suburban communities. Over the past two decades, the suburban communities in Kane, Kendall, DuPage and Cook Counties have had an increasing influence on development patterns in DeKalb County. The eastern counties added thousands of jobs between 1980 and 2000, and are projected to add thousands more over the next 20 years despite the current recession. During the period between 2000 and 2010, DeKalb County added another 5,200 jobs (an 11% increase), yet the County's total population increased by 23%.

In the past decade, the number of people living in DeKalb County but commuting to work outside the County jumped by 63%, a substantial increase. This trend is likely to continue, which means that pressure for residential development in DeKalb County and its communities is likely to reemerge in the coming years and continue at a pace that far exceeds increases in numbers of jobs in the County. At the same time the County experiences this increasing growth pressure from the east, the County will add population through its own internal natural growth. Like many other regions, municipalities in DeKalb County will face the challenge of balancing residential growth against growth in the commercial and industrial sectors.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In 2003, the County adopted the Unified Comprehensive Plan. The public participation effort for that update was extensive, and featured updates of the municipal comprehensive plans with the oversight of the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission. Because this Comprehensive Plan is an update that focuses on changes in demographics and issues that have emerged since 2003, the issues identified for unincorporated DeKalb County by the public and elected and appointed officials at the time of the development of the 2003 Plan remain valid at this time, and are incorporated into this document. These issues generally translated into two major policies:

1. Preserve prime agricultural land for agricultural uses by discouraging scattered development throughout the rural, unincorporated portions of the County; and
2. Encourage nonagricultural growth to occur on land immediately adjacent to the boundaries of the municipalities, where the public infrastructure and services necessary to support growth are located.

The simplified public participation efforts for this Comprehensive Plan included preparing a revised Unified Future Land Use Plan that showed the current municipal boundaries and any changes to the municipal future land use plans. The goals and objectives were also updated to reflect a refinement of the goals from the 2003 Plan as well as issues that have arisen in the intervening years. The updated Future Land Use Plan and draft Goals and Objectives were presented for public review and comment at three open houses conducted in the north, central and south portions of the County (details of input from the open houses are included in the Appendix to this Plan). Comments gathered at the open house meetings were analyzed as part of the final draft of this Plan. The draft updated Plan was also submitted for review and comments to various public and private organizations, including each of the surrounding counties, each municipality, the DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study (MPO), the DeKalb County Farm Bureau, the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation, the DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District, Northern Illinois University, and Kishwaukee College. All comments from the public and agencies were collected and evaluated in the development of the final draft of the updated Unified Comprehensive Plan.

Public Hearing

On March 24, 2011, a Public Hearing was held to obtain any additional public comment on the Comprehensive Plan. Seven people attended the meeting which was conducted by the County's Hearing Officer. Questions and comments were recorded, and explanations and responses were provided by the County Planning Director.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

One of the most important elements of a Comprehensive Plan is the identification of the goals the County is striving to achieve, and the objectives used to transform the goals into policies and procedures. In developing goals and objectives, the County is not only looking for solutions to existing problems, but is developing strategies and policies for the future.

Goals and objectives were developed with input from elected officials and the general public as part of the 2003 Unified Comprehensive Plan. These goals and objectives were re-visited and refined as part of this update to the Unified Comprehensive Plan, and provide the basis for formulating the Future Land Use Plan. The following goals are numbered for reference purposes only; the numbering does not represent priority and each goal is of equal weight and importance for the future land uses in DeKalb County.

- 1. Goal:** Preserve prime agricultural land while allowing for development and growth around municipalities.

Objectives:

- a. Induce nonagricultural growth, whether residential, commercial or industrial, to areas within or immediately adjacent to existing County municipalities.
- b. Limit residential growth in rural areas of the County to farm dwellings.
- c. Work with municipalities to accurately define areas where residential and commercial growth will occur.
- d. Discourage nonagricultural uses in areas designated on the Future Land Use Plan to remain in agricultural use.
- e. Adopt policies and regulations that allow small-scale and agricultural-based retail, service and entertainment uses to take place on farms in unincorporated DeKalb County.
- f. Encourage development associated with the fiberoptic network to occur within municipal boundaries rather than in scattered rural locations.
- g. Provide to property owners who voluntarily seek to preserve agricultural land for agriculture information regarding tools such as conservation easements, purchase and transfer of development rights, and agricultural areas.

- 2. Goal:** Preserve wetlands and floodplains, and reduce and eliminate erosion.

Objectives:

- a. Avoid development of floodplains except for passive recreational uses.
- b. Encourage use of regional wetland banking to maximize wetland benefits while reducing costs associated with numerous isolated wetlands within individual developments.
- c. Avoid development of septic sanitary systems in areas where soil conditions and other geological factors present possible problems in relation to ground water contamination.
- d. Require delineation, followed by protection or mitigation, of any wetlands depicted on the County GIS maps located on properties proposed for development.

- e. Continue to require erosion control/elimination measures as part of grading projects and new buildings and structures, and update these measures as necessary to implement best management practices.

3. Goal: Promote policies and development which protect and preserve natural resources.

Objectives:

- a. Limit development in areas where sand, gravel and other resource deposits are located until the resources have been fully excavated and appropriate planning for reuse of the land is accomplished.
- b. Identify and preserve significant woodland and other environmentally sensitive areas as part of the Forest Preserve system and on private property through the use of conservation easements.
- c. Before development in rural areas is allowed, impact on environmental features such as flood plains, site drainage and water features, soil stability and sanitary waste disposal, should be analyzed. Woodlands and natural drainage-ways should be considered as amenities rather than development obstacles.
- d. Undertake a study of ground water resources as a necessary first step in developing a ground water plan for DeKalb County.

4. Goal: Develop policies which protect standard farm operations from encroaching development or unwarranted complaints made by adjacent residential areas against normal farming practices.

Objectives:

- a. Provide adequate separation between agricultural and residential uses by discouraging residential development in rural areas.
- b. Require acknowledgment on deeds and/or plats that certain areas of the County are agricultural production areas which may generate noise, odors, dust and equipment traffic.

5. Goal: Require proper processing and disposal of solid waste and sanitary waste.

Objectives:

- a. Continue policies to implement the goals and objectives of the Solid Waste Management Plan, including encouraging recycling throughout the County.
- b. Discourage development of agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial uses which utilize septic systems for disposal of sanitary waste in areas where soil conditions are insufficient for waste disposal.
- c. Require subdivisions of any kind to connect to public or private water and sanitary systems.
- d. Encourage steps and programs to eventually achieve total recycling in the County.

6. **Goal:** Discourage scattered nonagricultural development in rural areas of the County.

Objectives:

- a. Create land use policies which permit higher residential densities where sanitary sewer and public water supplies are provided.
- b. Promote long-range planning by County municipalities which encourages development adjacent to existing communities which could possibly provide services or be annexed.
- c. Maintain zoning regulations which establish 40 acres as the minimum farm size required to construct a single-family dwelling unit, and eliminate exceptions to this standard.
- d. Encourage developers to pursue annexation to adjacent municipalities or to consider pre-annexation agreements where appropriate.

7. **Goal:** Promote appropriately located economic development throughout DeKalb County.

Objectives:

- a. Adequately identify and recognize land uses in the Comprehensive Plan for areas adjacent to existing or proposed airports which are subject to FAA approval or review.
- b. Support municipal economic development efforts.
- c. Facilitate dialog on projects of regional influence.
- d. Support the continued viability of historic downtowns throughout the County by limiting new commercial development on the periphery of communities. New outlying commercial development should be focused on uses which do not compete directly with downtown businesses.
- e. Continue to protect existing unique and important land uses, including but not limited to airstrips, cemeteries, forest preserves, and State parks, through evaluation of potential negative impacts to these uses by new growth and development.

8. **Goal:** Foster intergovernmental cooperation and efficient use of resources.

Objectives:

- a. Encourage the continuation of, and continue to participate in, the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission.
- b. Enter into inter-governmental agreements with the municipalities within the County to mutually support each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.
- c. Work with municipalities to develop boundary agreements.

9. **Goal:** Reduce the potential for flood damage to homes, businesses, and farms.

Objectives:

- a. Continue to work in cooperation with the municipalities within the County to develop future phases of the Countywide stormwater management plan and ordinance, including policies, plans and regulations that recognize the regional nature of stormwater management and encourage a watershed approach to storm water management issues.
- b. Require appropriate water retention and detention, including off-site impacts and relationships, on land slated for development to control surface run-off and contamination of water resources.

- c. Encourage municipalities to adopt a "green infrastructure" element to their comprehensive plans, in which existing floodplains and drainageways, as well as assessment of hydric soils, are identified for enhancement and protection from development.
- d. Encourage the use of more sustainable, "green" alternative methods of stormwater management, including but not limited to: permeable concrete and asphalt; underground stormwater detention; rain gardens; rain barrels; filtration strips; and groundwater recharge areas.
- e. Update County and municipal subdivision control regulations to implement "green" and best storm water management practices.
- f. Work with drainage districts, property owners, and other interested parties to clear debris from the Kishwaukee River and tributaries to reduce potential flooding.

10. Goal: Develop and maintain transportation systems which serve existing and future residents, farms and businesses.

Objectives:

- a. Protect the existing and identified future arterials and collectors as transportation routes by discouraging access points to these roads from private properties.
- b. Work with the municipalities in the County to protect the capacity of arterials and collectors by discouraging access from private properties and encouraging the use of frontage roads and access via local roads.
- c. Integrate transportation and land use planning to facilitate orderly growth.
- d. Explore potential of shuttle service from the County to existing commuter rail service, and the possibilities for a commuter rail station in the County itself.
- e. Promote expansion of regional trail systems throughout the County to meet both transportation and recreational objectives. Focus resources first on achieving connectivity between all existing bike/hike trails.
- f. Expand the network of all-weather roads.
- g. Encourage the development of mass transit opportunities, including but not limited to park and ride facilities for commuter and passenger rail service to the east and north, as well as improved bus service throughout the County.

11. Goal: Use and improve the County Geographical Information System to assess existing physical geography conditions and analyze possible developments and changes.

Objectives:

- a. Update the County aerial photography on a regular schedule.
- b. Require grading projects to be submitted in a digital format compatible with the County's GIS system so that the grading and drainage information may be integrated.
- c. Require, at a minimum, the use of the geographical information in the County's GIS for assessment of development projects, and where more detailed information is required to be generated, integrate such information into the County's system.

TRANSPORTATION

This section examines the major components of the overall transportation network of DeKalb County.

Throughout its history, DeKalb County has grown largely because of its rail and highway connections to markets such as Chicago and areas to the west. Future growth will likely depend upon the maintenance of these links.

Existing Network

In terms of regional transportation, DeKalb County is well served by major highway routes and rail lines (see Figure 2). Regional Interstate connections are via I-88 for east/west movements, and I-39, located four miles west of the County line in Ogle County, for north/south travel. Interstate 90 provides additional east/west travel opportunities just north of the County line in Boone and McHenry Counties. In addition, a network of State Highways provides continuous north/south access between Lake Geneva, Wisconsin and Champaign, Illinois.

Rail service is provided along five active lines, by three national carriers and one regional railroad, located throughout the County. In addition, air service is accommodated by the DeKalb-Taylor Municipal Airport and smaller, privately owned airports.

The predominant mode of transportation is highway oriented for both freight and commuter use. However, rail and air services could become a more important part of the transportation network of the County for both freight and commuter service. Rail service, while limited at this time to freight shipments, could provide possible growth potential if commuter routes are extended westward from the Chicago area. Additionally, the City of DeKalb, over the last decade, has completed an expansion program for the DeKalb-Taylor Municipal Airport. This expansion will provide significant growth potential not only for the City of DeKalb, but the County as a whole. Mass transit is provided by the Voluntary Action Center (VAC), which provides rides for seniors, the disabled, and the general public in the cities of DeKalb and Sycamore, and to Kishwaukee Community College outside the Village of Malta. VAC also provides rides for medical appointments, the hospitals, and health clinics. The Northern Illinois University Huskies Line provides transportation from the University into the cities of DeKalb and Sycamore.

State and County Highways

Two factors characterize most major highways passing through DeKalb County. First, nearly all the major highway routes are oriented for east/west vehicular movement, and second, all 14 municipalities are served by at least one of these routes.

There are six primary arterials running east/west through the County. Illinois Routes 72, 64, and 38 bisect the County and are located from the City of DeKalb northward. In addition, I-88 crosses

the center of the County though the southern area of the City of DeKalb. The two remaining highways for east/west travel patterns are U.S. 30, which passes through Hinckley, Waterman, and Shabbona, and U.S. 34, which cuts diagonally across the southeastern corner of the County, passing through Somonauk and Sandwich.

North/south travel on State highways is limited by the lack of routes in this direction. Illinois 23 is the only State highway connecting the northern areas of the County to the south. Peace Road provides an important north/south connection from I-88 to Plank Road.

An important issue with many of the State Routes is the amount of truck traffic that they accommodate. These routes pass through the historic downtowns of almost every major DeKalb County municipality. Particularly troubling to residents is the noise and disruption caused by the numerous gravel and garbage trucks on Route 72 and Route 30. The municipalities and the County should work with IDOT in exploring alternative truck routes and minimizing impact on the downtown business districts of DeKalb County. The further development of the rail port in Rochelle to the west will likely increase truck traffic on the east-west routes through DeKalb County.

Select traffic counts from 2008 show that the busiest traffic area in the County continues to be Route 23 between Barber Greene Rd. and Route 38, which had an ADT of 25,000 in 1998 and currently shows 24,800. Equally busy are I-88, which shows volumes of 28,600 between Route 23 and East County Line Road, and Route 38, which showed volumes of 21,400 between Annie Glidden Rd. and the South Branch of the Kishwaukee River in 2003, but only 18,100 in 2008.

Between 2003 and 2008 traffic counts in several areas increased significantly, while other showed significant decreases (some due to construction altering traffic patterns). Peace Road continues to show some of the largest traffic volume increases of 46% between Bethany Road and Barber Greene Road. Rt. 30 had an increase of 85% east of the Village of Hinckley. Traffic volumes in the Southeastern area of the county continue the steady increase in spite of economic downturns. (See Table 13).

Traffic volumes along Rt. 72 decreased by 56% between Washington and Rt. 23, most likely caused by construction in and north of the City of Genoa. Somonauk Road volumes, which had decreased by 10% (1993 to 1998) between Bethany Road and Rt. 64, only decreased by 2% from 2003 to 2008. Note that the traffic counts were conducted in July, at a time of year when enrollment at NIU is low, so student commuters continue to be under-represented.

Table 13: Selected Traffic Volumes 2003-2008

ROAD NAME	SEGMENT	2003 ADT	2008 ADT	CHANG E	% CHANG E
Rt. 30	West County Line Road to Shabbona Rd.	2,900	2,500	-500	-17%
Rt. 30	Rt. 23 to Somonauk Rd.	4,700	4,200	-550	-11%
Rt. 30	E. Sandwich Rd. to the East County Line	6,600	12,200	5600	85%
Rt. 34	Somonauk Rd. to Gletty Rd.	7,800	7,400	-400	-5%
Rt. 34	Somonauk to Latham Rd.	11,500	12,100	600	5%
Chicago Rd.	Shabbona Rd. to Leland Rd.	1,050	1,250	200	19%
Chicago Rd.	Rt. 23 to Gov. Beveridge Hwy.	1,750	1,850	100	6%
Chicago Rd.	Somonauk. to E. Sandwich Rd.	4,050	4,750	700	17%
Interstate 88	I-39 to Annie Glidden Rd.	15,700	17,700	2,000	13%
Interstate 88	Glidden to Peace Rd.	18,500	22,500	3,700	20%
Interstate 88	Peace Rd. to Rt. 47	24,200	28,600	4,400	18%
State Rt. 38	S. Malta Rd. to Nelson Rd.	9,000	9,000	N/C	0%
State Rt. 38	Glidden Rd. to S. Br. Kishwaukee	21,400	18,100	-3,300	-15%
State Rt. 38	Hinckley Rd. to East County Line Rd.	7,600	7,600	N/C	0%
Rt. 64	Esmond Rd. to Malta Rd.	3,950	3,900	-50	-1%
Rt. 64	Motel Rd. to Rt. 23	8,700	10,900	2200	25%
Rt. 64	Airport Rd. to East County Line Rd.	6,600	6,600	N/C	0%
Rt. 72	West County Line Road to Irene Rd.	2,400	2,450	50	2%
Rt. 72	Washington to Rt. 23	10,700	4,700	-6,000	-56%
Rt. 72	Rt. 23 to New Lebanon Rd.	5,900	4,950	-950	-8%
Rt. 23	Derby Line Rd. to Base Line Rd.	8,800	7,400	-1,400	-16%
Rt. 23	Barber Greene Rd. to Rt. 38	27,000	24,800	-2,200	-8%
Rt. 23	Gurler Rd. to Perry Rd.	4,200	4,250	50	1%
Rt. 23	Rt. 30 to Chicago Rd.	1,900	4,350	450	24%
Glidden Rd.	North County Line to Cherry Valley Rd.	850	N/C		
Glidden Rd.	Rt. 72 to Old State Rd.	5,100	6,000	900	18%
Glidden Rd.	Twombly Rd. to Rt. 38	20,300	21,250	900	4%
Somonauk Rd.	Suydam Rd. to Pratt Rd.	3,500	3,950	450	13%
Somonauk Rd.	McGirr Rd. to Perry Rd.	2,150	2,350	200	9%
Somonauk Rd.	Bethany Rd. to Rt. 64	6,000	5,900	-100	-2%
Latham St.	Rt. 34 to Pratt Rd.	2,200	5,200	300	14%
East Sandwich Rd.	Pratt Rd. to Chicago Rd.	4,600	4,850	750	16%
East Sandwich Rd.	Chicago Rd. to Rt. 30	2,350	2,450	100	4%
Peace Rd.	Bethany Rd. to Barber Greene Rd.	10,100	14,700	4,600	46%
Peace Rd.	Rt. 38 to Fairview Dr.	9,500	11,300	1,800	20%
Peace Rd.	Rt. 23 to Brickville Rd.	9,000	11,900	2,900	32%

Rail Transportation

DeKalb County is served by several rail lines, and every County municipality except Sycamore is located along at least one route. While passenger service was provided in the past, the existing lines currently accommodate freight transport only. Additionally, these routes generally do not provide a significant amount of service to local industrial producers, due to decreased reliance on rail transportation.

While the decreases in the use of the rail lines coincides with national trends, the existing rail lines do provide available infrastructure for certain industrial users. There are four active rail lines serving DeKalb County, with three active rail users (3M, Goodyear and Nestle).

The Chicago, Central & Pacific Railroad

The Chicago, Central & Pacific Railroad, formerly the Illinois Central Railroad, serves Genoa along a route which extends from Chicago to Sioux City, Iowa. Service on this route is provided on a single track and has limited traffic, averaging six through trains daily. However, it does provide sidings to several locations within the city limits of Genoa. This line is limited to freight traffic only. This line has been studied as a potential corridor for commuter rail service in the Chicago suburbs but no such service is imminent.

The ICE Railroad

The ICE Railroad, formerly the Soo Railroad, provides rail services to the communities of Genoa, Kingston, and Kirkland. The ICE Railroad operates a single track and is used by approximately 10 trains daily and is limited to freight traffic only. Passenger service was once provided on this railroad. Today, commuter rail service operates on this line between Elgin and Union Station in Chicago. Commuter service into DeKalb County has been contemplated but is not expected to be extended in the near future. The line provides several sidings in the above communities which are seldom used. Amtrak has developed a plan to extend its service to Genoa, but a final decision on this service is not expected until sometime in 2011.

The Union Pacific Railroad

The Union Pacific Railroad, formerly the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, is the most active of the rail lines within the County. The Railroad operates two high-speed tracks through Cortland, DeKalb, Malta and Maple Park. This line has approximately 50 trains daily. The majority of traffic along the main line is through freight traffic only. Numerous sidings are still available, particularly in DeKalb, though infrequently used. Passenger service was once provided on this railroad. Today, commuter rail service operates on this line between Elburn and the Olgivie Transportation Center in downtown Chicago. Extension of Metra commuter service to DeKalb County has been discussed for many years, but such extension is not expected in the near future.

The Union Pacific also operates a line between DeKalb and Spring Valley. This line runs diagonally across the County and passes through unincorporated communities such as Elva, McGirr, Shabbona Grove and Rollo. Service on this line is limited, with less than six trains per week.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, formerly the Burlington Northern Railroad, operates two lines within DeKalb County. The municipalities of Lee, Shabbona, Waterman, and Hinckley are located along one of these routes. The Railroad operates a single track in these communities and rail traffic consists of approximately 20 freight trains daily. Passenger service was once provided on this railroad. No passenger or commuter service is now provided, but this line ties into Metra commuter routes in Aurora with service to the Olgivie Center in downtown Chicago.

The second line operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe is located in the southeastern corner of the County and serves the communities of Somonauk and Sandwich. The Railroad operates two high speed tracks on this line. This line, too, ties into the Metra commuter rail system in Aurora with service to downtown Chicago. Passenger service was once provided on this railroad; today, only Amtrak service on this line is available in neighboring Plano in Kendall County. Commuter rail service is planned to be extended along this line to Oswego, but the date of such extension is uncertain. Although commuter service does not extend into DeKalb County at the time of this Plan, the Village of Somonauk and City of Sandwich have expressed interest, along with Plano and Yorkville to the east, in extending such service to those communities.

Air Transportation

The DeKalb-Taylor Municipal Airport (DTMA) is the most active of any airstrip located in the County. A major program of improvements is on-going, ensuring surplus capacity for the foreseeable future. At present, the DTMA has a 4,200-foot, east-west runway and a 7,000+-foot, northeast-southwest runway supported by a visual flight recognition and instrument flight recognition navigational aids. The facility has a flight-based operator (FBO) and is designed to accommodate private and corporate aircraft. Air freight, charter, flight instruction and aircraft rental and sales services are available at DTMA.

In comparison to the DTMA, the remaining airports in the County are small and provide little growth potential. The largest of the private airstrips in the County is located in the City of Sandwich. The Sandwich Airport consist of one 3000-foot paved and lighted runway and is a privately owned commercial airstrip. Airport facilities include a restaurant, several airport related commercial businesses and a residential subdivision known as Woodlake Landings. The airport has approximately 100 based aircraft with numerous hangars for private plane storage.

The Sandwich Airport faces several limitations which make expansion difficult. The airport is a privately owned and operated facility and therefore has limited eligibility for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funds. A more limiting factor is the location of the airport. The western

limits of the runway border a public forest preserve. The presence of residential units near the airport facility may limit the ability to upgrade according to the FAA. In addition, U.S. Highway 34 and the B.N.S.F. Railroad are located just north of the existing runway, which would cause problems for a cross wind runway. Finally, any expansion would be costly given the current low level of aviation activities. As with the DTMA, the Sandwich Airport is located within the limits of a municipality and not under County jurisdiction.

The remaining airfields in the County include the Hinckley Airport, which is open to public use and is an important local facility, and several private turf airstrips. There are around a dozen of these facilities, generally serving one or two aircraft for personal use and located on private land. These fields have limited potential for providing services other than commuting options or personal recreation opportunities for individuals. However, as these strips often accommodate air traffic other than that associated with the private property, consideration should be given of the potential negative impacts to existing airstrips when new land uses and structures are proposed on adjacent and nearby properties.

Regional airports also serve business and recreational travelers from DeKalb County. O'Hare International Airport, Chicago Midway Airport (both in the City of Chicago), and to a lesser extent, the Greater Rockford Airport all provide service to County residents. The proximity of these facilities ensures that major air travel needs of County residents are met.

Proposed Road Extensions

DeKalb County has a strong east/west transportation network, but there is only one major arterial that runs north/south (Rt. 23). However, it seems that the County's north/south transportation network is sufficient at this time. DeKalb County does not want growth to occur too rapidly, therefore very few road extensions are being proposed at this time. The proposed exchanges reflect current growth patterns and deal primarily with adding lanes for increased capacity and connectors. It is important to understand that proposing road extensions does not require capital commitment or a set time constraint. After careful examination of the existing network and recommendations from municipalities and residents, the County Plan includes the following road extensions:

- o Extend Airport Road north to Plank Road
- o Extend North Grove Road from Rt. 23 to Plank Road
- o Connect Malta Road (at the intersection of Malta Road and Rt. 38) to S. Malta Road at Lang Road
- o Extend South County Line Road east to Millington Road
- o Provide eastern extension of Coy Road, located north of Sandwich, to connect with Miller Road in Kendall County
- o Provide a collector (Fairwind Drive) from W. Sandwich Road to Sheridan Road near Lake Holiday in LaSalle Co.

As shown on the future Transportation Plan included in the Appendix of this document, all proposed roads are secondary arterials or major collectors. These changes were proposed to help alleviate existing traffic congestion, make certain areas more accessible, and divert through-traffic off of local roads. For example, the proposed connection between Bethany Road and Rt. 38 would create a by-

pass route around the north and west sides of DeKalb and divert some traffic away from downtown DeKalb. Improving Base Line Road to minor collector or major collector status would provide an alternative to Rt. 72 through Genoa, Kingston and Kirkland. The extension of Miller Road would provide future access to Rt. 47, Orchard Road and Aurora.

Four transportation classifications are used by the DeKalb County Highway Department and are shown on the Transportation Plan: primary arterials, secondary arterials, major collectors and minor collectors. Primary arterials are defined as all Federal or State Routes serving a large regional area. I-88 and Routes 30 and 34 are Federal highways while the rest of the primary arterials are State Routes. A secondary arterial connects primary arterials with other primary arterials and runs through several of the communities in DeKalb County. Most of these secondary arterials run north/south and compensate for the lack of primary arterials running north/south. Major collectors are well traveled routes serving as links into neighboring communities. Minor collectors serve small volumes of traffic and indirectly link roads with other roads.

Residents comments as part of the Year 2003 Comprehensive plan suggested a few other proposed road changes but these changes were secondary in nature, and therefore not shown on the map. One proposed change is to provide a new interchange at I-88 and Hinckley Road and realign Hinckley Road to connect with Airport Road to the north.

In the Rt. 30 corridor, it was suggested that Duffy Road be extended to Scott Road on the east and Cemetery Road on the west, and Preserve Road be extended to Jericho Road on the east in order to provide parallel collector roads to Rt. 30.

A suggested alternative in the southern end of the County is to shift the minor collector designation currently given to Gov. Beveridge Highway west to Council Road. This concept would include a future extension of Council Road north to Chicago Road and a possible overpass at the B.N.S.F. Railway at the County line.

Another future transportation improvement suggested by several residents is to extend Peace Road south to Keslinger Road. From this future intersection, Peace Road could be further extended by swinging east to connect with Howison Road or by swinging west to connect with Route 23, or continue on to Perry Road.

Trail System

In addition to road extensions, the County has proposed expanding the existing trail network in DeKalb and Sycamore to various places throughout the County. Existing trails include the DeKalb Nature Trail, Peace Road Trail, and the Great Western Trail.

The 2003 DeKalb County Unified Comprehensive Plan identified a proposed trail system that would connect the existing trails with many of the forest preserves in the County and would travel along roads, rivers, and some railroads. Since then, additional trail possibilities have also been developed. Desirable hiking/biking trail locations now include:

- 1). Along the Union Pacific Railroad Spring Valley line extending from the City of DeKalb southwest to the county line;
- 2). A link from the City of DeKalb to Afton Forest Preserve, and then generally south/southeast into Sandwich and Somonauk;
- 3). A link from the proposed Union Pacific trail to the Peace Road Trail;
- 4). An extension of the Peace Road Trail north along the proposed Airport Rd. extension;
- 5). Along the Kishwaukee River north from DeKalb and Sycamore, through Genoa, Kingston and Kirkland west to the edge of the County;
- 6). A link from Kishwaukee College through Malta to the City of DeKalb;
- 7). A link from the City of DeKalb to the Town of Cortland along Loves Road and Barber Greene Road; and
- 8). A link from Shabbona to Waterman to Hinckley.

The need for alternative means of travel has and continues to increase in the light of dwindling fossil fuel resources, continuing population growth, and environmental concerns. The proposed trails will not only encourage travel to local forest preserves and parks for recreational opportunities, but facilitate bike and pedestrian travel to places of employment, public and private institutions, and retail and service locations. The proposed locations of these trails, however, are conceptual. There is no commitment to the exact location of these trails nor is there a specific time frame in which these trails will be built. There has been much support by residents for such a trail system. In fact, every individual community comprehensive plan that is part of this Unified Comprehensive Plan has identified trail development and linkages to locations through the County as a high priority. Implementation of new trails will occur as funds become available. However, concern has been raised regarding trails crossing over private property and this issue will be discussed at length before implementation is started.

In July, 2003, the DeKalb County Greenways and Trails Coalition (GTC) was formed to spearhead development of a County-wide trail system. The GTC is an outgrowth of the Kishwaukee Kiwanis Club Pathway Committee and the DeKalb County Forest Preserve District, and includes representation by individuals, businesses and government bodies from all corners of the County. At present, the GTC, through the office of the DeKalb County Forest Preserve District, is applying for grants to develop a comprehensive bike and trail system in the County.

A 2010 study conducted under the supervision of the DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study (DSATS) identified connectivity as the major issue for the existing trail system*. This suggests that available resources should first be devoted to achieving connections between all portions of the existing trails in order to maximize their utility for users. Opportunities to expand the trail system should also be pursued.

The Future Transportation Plan shows all existing and proposed roads and trails. Forest Preserves are also shown to help illustrate the accessibility of forest preserves via the proposed trails.

* DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study (DSATS) Recreation Trail Usage Study, dated December, 2010, by Monashae Brown, Kara Haller, and Dominick Lafata under the direction of Andrew J. Kremenec, PhD, Northern Illinois University Geography Department

UNIFIED FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Unified Future Land Use Plan of the DeKalb County Unified Comprehensive Plan, dated May 18, 2011 and referenced herein as though attached hereto, provides a framework to assist the County in planning for and regulating development in unincorporated DeKalb County while preserving the agricultural nature of the area. It also reflects the visions for the future of the municipalities within the County. While the Plan does not legally control the use of property, it does provide a basis for legislative and administrative measures such as zoning and subdivision regulations. Essentially, the Unified Future Land Use Plan serves as a reference and a guide to private developers, individual citizens, elected officials and County staff in the sale, purchase, or development of property.

Development of the Unified Future Land Use Plan is based on the Future Land Use Plans developed by each of the municipalities within DeKalb County. These plans were combined with the Future Land Use Plan from the 2003 DeKalb County Unified Comprehensive Plan. Essentially, the resultant Unified Future Land Use Plan shows the plans for the communities, and shows the remaining portions of unincorporated DeKalb County remaining in agricultural or conservation uses.

The preservation of agricultural land in the areas outside the municipal planning jurisdictions is a key goal reflected in the Unified Future Land Use Plan. As noted earlier, over 98% of DeKalb County's soils are considered prime. Because farming plays an important role throughout the economy of DeKalb County, farm land should be protected both by County land use policy and by private property owners voluntarily employing techniques such as conservation easements. Farming operations support a wide variety of retail businesses. By maintaining a policy of protecting farm land the County can encourage continued prosperity for individual farmers and the local commercial interests who depend on the agricultural economy.

With every farming operation lost, due to retirement or consolidation, the assumption that the land will continue to be used for agricultural purposes may not be accurate. The farming sector of DeKalb County will likely strive to maintain the preservation of prime farm land. However, there will also be a tendency on the part of individual land owners to consider abandoning their farm operations because of development pressures and the significant increases in land values associated with these pressures. In addition, larger farming operations or corporations may see fit to offset economic downturns by developing or selling off acreage considered expendable.

The potential for a high return on farmland conversion presents an incentive to resist reinvestment, or sell out to development interests. By directing development away from agricultural areas towards areas adjacent to existing municipalities, the County can effectively serve to reduce development uncertainty in the outlying portions of the County. This type of development approach will provide stability to land owners who wish to continue farming and will likely encourage reinvestment in, and expansion of, existing agricultural operations. This approach will also provide developers with the knowledge that adequate buffering will be maintained from agricultural operations. Finally, concentrating development adjacent to existing public utilities will reduce the public cost of development, limit destruction of the environment and reduce the undesirable effects of "urban sprawl."

Sprawl is costly to tax payers because of the expense involved in extending public services and utilities to a relatively small numbers of residents. In addition, new residents in rural areas often demand better police, fire and ambulance protection as well as improved public sewers, public water, trash service and better roads, which they have typically received in urban areas. Concentrating development, by contrast, is less expensive to build and maintain, more efficient, protects farm land and reduces conflicts between incompatible uses. Because modern farming techniques and practices can be noisy, dusty and, in the case of livestock operations, odor producing, residential development should be encouraged to locate in concentrated areas adjacent to municipalities. Just as it would not be appropriate to locate residential developments adjacent to industrial areas, non-farm residential and commercial development should be discouraged from locating in agricultural areas.

The key features of the Unified Future Land Use Plan are the future land uses shown around each municipality. Those recommended land uses reflect the growth and development vision for the individual communities, and this Plan endorses those visions by inclusion of those municipal future land use plans without alteration. Importantly, this Plan's endorsement of the municipal development plans is predicated on that development occurring through annexation.

To insure that adequate areas for residential development are illustrated on the Unified Future Land Use Plan, population estimates have been developed. The Washington D.C.-based county economic and demographic projection firm Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. has estimated that DeKalb County will reach a population of 123,445 by the year 2020, and 138,252 by 2030. This estimate is based on historic growth trends. In comparison, it is estimated that if all areas are developed at the highest residential densities illustrated on the Unified Future Land Use Plan, the County's population would be approximately 218,800 (not counting the number of new residences in the Mixed Use land category). **Compared to the Year 2010 population of 105,160, the Unified Future Land Use Plan could support between 46,190 to 113,670 additional residents (given the range of residential density per land use category), which is far in excess of the 20-year projected population growth for the County, without development of any areas proposed to remain in agricultural use.**

It is important to realize that this population capacity is not a population projection. This capacity is based on recommended development densities and current household size. However, what this capacity value indicates is that the Unified Future Land Use Plan should provide more than enough land to accommodate anticipated growth for the next 20 years.

An advocate of agricultural preservation might argue that based on this projected capacity, future residential use should be scaled back to match the projected 2030 population of 138,252. This has not been done for two reasons. First, our national history and laws promoting private property rights suggests that a land use plan must be flexible. It is not possible or prudent to project which specific parcels will develop at what time. Therefore, the Unified Future Land Use Plan should show more area for development than is actually projected since it is inevitable that some properties within an anticipated development area will remain in agriculture or vacant. Second, multiple goals in this

Plan suggest the need both to preserve agricultural lands and to allow for appropriate development. Providing some additional land for development beyond what a population projection might suggest allows greater flexibility for the plan to adjust to future economic conditions.

Land Use Categories

Agriculture

The Agriculture land use category covers an extensive portion of the County. Agriculture is shown in areas best utilized for the production of cash crops and should be protected from urban development because of its value as an irreplaceable resource within the County. One of the County's goals is to protect the County's agricultural heritage and prevent the conversion of prime farm land to non-agricultural uses.

Portions of the land in this category are used for farmsteads and very low density residential uses. Several isolated residential subdivisions are also included in the agriculture land use category. These subdivisions were approved prior to development of stronger County agricultural preservation policies. Expansion of existing isolated subdivisions and development of new isolated subdivisions and non-farm single-family residences is strongly discouraged in this Plan.

Economic conditions favor clustering of farm activities without urban intrusion for successful agriculture. The Plan shows adequate opportunities for development of housing and employment in the County while preserving the rural integrity of the County.

Low Density Residential

This land use category is defined as areas suited exclusively for single-family residential uses with a maximum density between one and three dwellings units per acre. Low Density Residential land use should be located in areas that are contiguous to municipalities and must be connected to public or semi-public water and sanitary systems at the time of development. Scattered residential development in rural areas is strongly discouraged. Decisions regarding the location of new Low Density Residential development should be based on technical issues such as access to existing utilities, soil conditions and water drainage, and on contextual issues such as conformance with the recommendations of this Plan and surrounding zoning and land uses. Development in this land use category should be directed toward areas that are poor in natural resources, saving fertile soils for agricultural purposes, and should occur through annexation to adjacent municipalities.

Planned developments that incorporate clustering of homes and preservation of open space or environmentally-sensitive areas are encouraged within the Low Density Residential areas. Where possible, natural features such as streams or woodlands should be used as buffers between new houses and agriculture.

Medium Density Residential

This land use category is defined as areas suited for predominantly single-family residential uses with a maximum density between three and six dwelling units per acre. Medium Density land use should occur in areas located adjacent to municipalities and must be connected to a public or semi-public water and sanitary system at the time of development. Decisions regarding the location of new Medium Density development should be based on technical issues such as access to existing utilities, soil conditions, and water drainage, and on contextual issues such as conformance with the recommendations of this Plan and surrounding zoning and existing land uses. Development in this land use category should be directed toward areas that are poor in natural resources, saving fertile soils for agriculture, and should occur through annexation to the adjacent municipality.

Mixed-Residential

The Mixed-Residential land use category designates the areas suitable for residential development in a manner that emulates the established neighborhoods in the municipalities. In this land use category, all residential building types, including single-family and multi-family, are permitted, but should not exceed the maximum ratios established by the municipality.

This land use category is defined as areas suited for a mix of residential land use with a maximum density between three and six dwelling units per acre. Multiple-family buildings may be permitted in areas designated for Mixed-Residential as a special use. Mixed-Residential land use should occur only on property that is annexed to a municipality, and must connect to public or semi-public water and sanitary systems at the time of development. Decisions regarding the location of new Mixed-Residential development should be based on technical issues such as access to existing utilities, soil conditions, and water drainage, and on contextual issues such as conformance with the recommendations of this Plan, surrounding zoning and existing land uses, and highway access. Development in this land use category should be directed toward areas that are poor in natural resources, saving fertile soils for agriculture, and should occur through annexation to the adjacent municipality.

Commercial

This land use category includes retail and service uses, as well as some office uses, which provide needed goods and services to residents and businesses. The expansion of commercial uses will be needed as residential growth increases in order to provide more goods and employment opportunities. All of the areas recommended for Commercial use are located near or within existing communities, and along primary or secondary arterial roads.

Mixed Use

This land use category applies to properties along State Rte. 64, on both the east and west sides of the planning jurisdiction of the City of Sycamore. These properties have been identified as

appropriate for a possible mixture of residential, commercial and industrial uses, and should be reviewed as planned developments, subject to review and approval by the City.

Office and Research

The Office and Research land use category is defined as areas suited for office, research and limited manufacturing uses in a campus-like environment. This land use should be located adjacent to arterial highways.

Industrial

Industrial land use includes non-agricultural manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale operations, and distribution and logistics facilities which provide jobs and products for DeKalb County residents. It is recommended that this type of development occur in large parcels or “districts,” rather than in scattered sites. Industrial development should be coordinated with transportation facilities, municipal annexations, and capital improvements because of the traffic it generates and other land use issues. Industrial uses are best suited in areas adjacent to existing developed land, preferably commercial uses, and in close proximity to arterial roads and railroads.

Civic/Institutional

Civic uses are properties owned and operated by federal, state, or local government and include: schools, cemeteries, or governmental administration and services. Institutional uses are private uses which generally serve the public and include religious facilities and private schools. This plan shows existing civic and institutional uses such as Kishwaukee Community College and the Sandwich Fairgrounds. It is important to consider the current use of public and private facilities and the possible need for more such facilities as growth occurs. In addition, existing civic/institutional facilities may need to be expanded in the future to meet the needs of a growing population. While not specifically illustrated on the Unified Future Land Use Plan, such expansion is generally considered appropriate to serve the needs of County residents.

Open Space

Open space is land within a municipal planning jurisdiction that is either used or is designated for future use as public or private parks, golf courses, natural areas, and low-intensity land uses such as stormwater management facilities.

Conservation

This land use category is established both to protect natural resources, woodlands and the floodplains throughout the County. Conservation land use shown on the Unified Future Land Use Plan is general, and mainly depicts major floodplain areas. However, the Conservation

recommendation applies to all floodplains, as well as to existing stands of trees. *It is assumed that the majority of land recommended for conservation use would remain in private ownership.*

Review of any new development proposals in unincorporated DeKalb County should include a detailed review of current floodplains, soils, wetlands, endangered species and other site specific information to see if such elements highlight the need for conservation and protection. Although some development may already exist in these areas, further development within Conservation areas should generally be limited to recreational or agricultural uses. If development is proposed in these areas, careful consideration of the existing natural resources and adjacent land uses must be considered beforehand. The long term economic and physical health of the land and its residents depends on the preservation of these conservation areas.

To permanently protect these Conservation areas, private property owners are encouraged to consider designation of conservation easements for sensitive or unique areas of their property such as woodlands, wetlands, or native prairie. At the request of the property owner, these areas can also be rezoned utilizing the Floodplain/Conservation zoning district.

The floodplain portion of the Conservation land use category is intended to protect floodplains along the various streams and rivers in DeKalb County from encroachment by development. The locations for floodplain areas are available on Flood Insurance Rate Maps for DeKalb County, which are included on the County's GIS maps. These maps should be consulted for all development proposals on land that includes or is adjacent to the floodplains, and such proposals should include preparation of detailed topography and hydrology studies to verify actual regulatory floodplain limits and elevations.

Although some development may already exist in the floodplain areas, further development within floodplains is strongly discouraged by this Plan, and should generally be limited to recreational and agricultural uses. If development is proposed in floodplain areas, careful consideration of existing natural resources, adjacent land uses and economic impact must be included prior to construction.

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Future Transportation Plan of the DeKalb County Unified Comprehensive Plan, dated May 18, 2011 and referenced herein as though attached hereto, acknowledges that there exists an inseparable relationship between land use and transportation. The importance of the road network cannot be overstated; roads are the primary determinant of land use. As long as moving people and goods from place to place remains essential, efficiently planned, designed, constructed and maintained roads will be key to achieving the vision for the future of communities. By contrast, inefficient road networks, inadequate road connections, roads that carry more traffic than they are designed to accommodate, and too many access points interrupting high-volume roads all combine to create traffic congestion and hazards and reduce the quality of life and economic opportunity in the community.

Every existing and future road can be differentiated by its use and design, ranging from “local” streets which provide direct access to the properties through which they run (such as the streets in residential subdivisions), to “major arterials,” which often only have access by other roads or ramps (such as state and interstate highways). Arterials and collectors are distinguished from local roads because their primary purpose is the movement of traffic through a region rather than providing road access to individual properties. Consequently, they require limited access in order to operate efficiently. When planning on a regional level, as has been done via this Unified Comprehensive Plan project, identifying and accounting for the major roads which go through and connect the various communities, and adopting and enforcing policies which recognize and protect these roads as transportation rather than access corridors, becomes vitally important. Because each community independently is affected by, and can influence the efficiency of, these major roads, it is essential that municipal comprehensive plans and the County comprehensive plan agree with one another on the identification and future use of these roads.

With this in mind, the Future Transportation Plan identifies the major roads within and through the County and ranks them by function, thereby highlighting those roads which should be preserved and protected as transportation routes with limited or no access from adjacent private properties. The Future Transportation Plan also identifies existing roads which are likely to become arterials and collectors in the future, as well as future roads and road extensions that should be constructed. The Transportation Plan should be consulted when any development proposal is reviewed to assure that these important roads continue to provide for the current and future needs of the County and its residents, and that necessary right-of-way for road expansion and extension can be preserved for future network improvements.

Beyond the road network, this Plan recognizes the need for mass transit in the County, as well as for other transportation options, including trails. The development of a commuter rail station in DeKalb County would reduce congestion on the road network as well as reduce consumption of fossil fuels. Given the costs and complexities of establishing a new commuter rail station, the County should explore the possibility of developing one or more "park and ride" sites to provide shuttle service to the nearest existing station in Elburn, IL. The County should also encourage and participate in the expansion and improvement of the bus service provided by the Voluntary Action Center (which provides transportation services for disable persons as well as general bus service) and Northern Illinois University's Huskies Line.

The Future Transportation Plan sets forth a comprehensive future trail system. Trails afford not only an opportunity for recreation, but provide bicycle access throughout employment, retail and service, and cultural sites in the County. The County should actively pursue opportunities to develop new trails and improve the existing trail system, particularly by establishing connections between all portions of the existing trail system. Further, the possibility of constructing bike lanes on new roads and as part of road improvements should continue to be evaluated, and such lanes should be included where funding is available.

IMPLEMENTATION

Since the adoption of the 2003 DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan, a number of events have occurred to help implement that Plan. The County made revisions to its zoning and subdivision regulations to include new standards designed to enforce the policies of the 2003 Plan, and the County Board regularly referred to the recommendations of that Plan in evaluating development proposals. Another significant step by the County has been the continuation of the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission. It meets regularly and affords a forum for continued communication, cooperation and coordination on issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries. The County has also adopted a Countywide Stormwater Management Plan and Ordinance, and each of the municipalities have been granted exempt status by demonstrating local stormwater management regulations that are at least as comprehensive and extensive as the County's. The Stormwater Management Plan is currently in its second phase, and continued research and refinement of stormwater management is encouraged by this Plan. Finally, the County has expanded the information available on its GIS maps, including aerial photography, contours, soils, wetlands, floodplains, and watersheds. This resource is available to all property owners, potential developers, and decision-makers in the County, and its use is encouraged.

This Unified Comprehensive Plan is a policy document to be used to guide and direct future growth and development decisions. However, the County must rely on many other planning tools and techniques to achieve the vision set forth in this document. To this end, the County will adopt any needed revisions to its zoning, subdivision, and stormwater management regulations, following adoption of this Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the County will rely on each of the municipalities to implement their respective comprehensive plans in order to achieve the common goals set forth in this document.

Zoning Authority

All 14 of DeKalb County's incorporated communities have local zoning authority. The unincorporated communities of Fairdale, New Lebanon, Charter Grove, Shabbona Grove, Rollo, Esmond, McGirr, Elva and Clare rely on DeKalb County for zoning control.

In order to implement the recommendations and policies of this Unified Comprehensive Plan, the County should:

- o Review and amend as necessary the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Stormwater Management Plan and Ordinance;
- o Encourage the individual municipalities within DeKalb County to review and amend as necessary their zoning, subdivision and storm water management regulations in order to implement their new comprehensive plans;

- o Review the recommendations, goals and objectives, and policies of this Plan as part of the deliberation on every request for a zoning or development action (variations, special uses, zone changes, zoning text amendments, subdivisions, and planned developments), and encourage the municipalities within the County to do the same with respect to their own comprehensive plans; and
- o Encourage the adoption of consistent building codes for the County and the municipalities within the County.
- o Encourage the development of a “green infrastructure” element in each municipal comprehensive plan, coordinated with the goals and objectives of the Countywide Stormwater Management Plan.

Planning Coordination

In Illinois, land use and transportation planning is a shared responsibility between municipalities, townships, and counties. Several policies are recommended to encourage joint planning and cooperation between governments in DeKalb County to promote the efficient use of land and other resources.

The County should:

- o Seek inter-governmental agreements with each of the municipalities that are entirely or partially within the borders of DeKalb County to express endorsement of and mutual support for this Unified Comprehensive Plan and the individual municipal comprehensive plans that were concurrently developed and adopted;
- o Publicize and update the DeKalb County Unified Comprehensive Plan to encourage its use in the decision-making process. This includes making copies of the Plan available in all municipalities and libraries and presenting the Plan, as requested, to various organizations throughout the County;
- o Annually review this Unified Comprehensive Plan, and update the Plan as needed (every 5 to 10 years) to remain consistent with current local conditions;
- o Ensure compliance with the intent of the Unified Comprehensive Plan as a prerequisite to development within the County's jurisdiction;
- o Encourage coordinated and cooperative agreements between municipalities and other public agencies that lower the cost of providing public services. In particular, promote joint agreements between township road commissions to share equipment and purchase supplies in bulk;

- o Encourage land-use, boundary and administrative agreements between municipalities and between the County and municipalities, to eliminate defensive municipal annexation or private developer influence of municipal or county approval processes;
- o Continue to participate in the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission, and seek to increase and expand the role of the Regional Planning Commission to promote the exchange of ideas and meaningful dialogue between County agencies, townships and municipal authorities on important issues of regional significance;
- o Encourage the development and enactment of additional State legislation that would provide incentives to land owners to keep farmland in agricultural uses;
- o Encourage the development and enactment of State legislation that would remove property taxes as the source of school funding and provide a more equitable means of funding education in the various school districts throughout the County;
- o Encourage the State to increase funding for planning and construction of commuter rail and other methods of public mass transportation within DeKalb County and the surrounding Chicago metropolitan area;
- o Cooperate with municipalities and utility providers in controlling development and preventing land uses that would hinder the orderly provision of utilities; and
- o Encourage municipalities within the County to regularly update their individual Comprehensive Plans at least every 5 to 10 years.
- o Encourage cooperation between municipalities in developing regional transportation facilities and programs.
- o Provide information about tools and techniques for preserving prime agricultural land for agriculture, such as conservation easements, purchase and transfer of development rights, and agricultural areas, to private property owners who voluntarily seek long-term preservation of farmland for farming.

Education and Involvement

On-going education about the recommendations, goals and objectives and policies of this Plan is important to its implementation. The County should:

- o Raise the standard of development in the County by educating developers about good planning and design standards for subdivision layout, site planning, landscaping, building and sign appearance, highway access, parking capacity and storm water management. This

can be accomplished formally through training seminars and informally through suggestions during the development review process;

- o Continue to use the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission as a forum for the County and its constituent municipalities to share development experiences and cooperate on issues of regional importance and cross-jurisdictional impact; and
- o Use the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission as a means to encourage individual communities to implement their respective comprehensive plans. Each year, the Regional Planning Commission should set aside one meeting for a review by each member community of the use and effectiveness of their individual comprehensive plans.

Information

In order to assure that important information related to this Unified Comprehensive Plan is available, the County should:

- o Maintain up-to-date and easily accessible records of information regarding land-use conditions, environmental conditions, jurisdictional boundaries, public facility capacities, and local and regional land-use plans through the County's GIS;
- o Coordinate data collection and data sharing between municipalities, townships and County agencies to provide the most efficient and least expensive source of commonly used data; and
- o Require, before the decision-making process, conspicuous public notices to residents and surrounding government agencies that provide relevant information about proposed development and requested zoning actions, potential impacts, and opportunities for participation.

APPENDIX

Public Participation:

o An Open House to solicit citizen input on the draft of this Unified Comprehensive Plan was held on January 11, 2011 at the Genoa Municipal Building in Genoa, IL. Eight (8) members of the public attended the meeting. Comments received included:

-- Bob Fleury of Elgin, IL, who suggested the Comprehensive Plan should attempt to address inequities between taxes collected at the local level and levels of expenditures on public services.

Response: The Comprehensive Plan is not the instrument to address general tax policy, being primarily a land use document. However, the concern was passed on to the County Administrator's Office.

-- Dick Kearney of Genoa, IL observed that the scale and location of development in DeKalb County since 2003 has borne out the wisdom of that Plan's policy of preserving prime agricultural land for agriculture and inducing non-agricultural growth and development to occur through annexation to the municipalities.

Response: These same approaches are contained in the draft Comprehensive Plan.

-- Tom Brian of Genoa, IL requested that his private drive not be depicted on the Future Land Use Plan or the Transportation Plan so that it is not confused with a public road.

Response: The request to remove the depicted private drive was forwarded to the DeKalb County Information Management Office.

o An Open House to solicit citizen input on the draft of this Unified Comprehensive Plan was held on January 12, 2011 at the Sycamore Center, 2nd Floor Council Chambers in Sycamore, IL. Approximately 26 members of the public attended the meeting. Comments received included:

-- Jack Bennett of DeKalb, IL provided a written document with suggestions for changes to the draft Comprehensive Plan text. Highlights of his comments included: 1) urging the DeKalb County Board to consider the tax implications of farm land versus residential development in making land use decisions, 2) highlighting the presence of existing airstrips and adopting regulations to protect them from new uses on surrounding land that might reduce their effectiveness, and 3) to encourage the creation of and public defense of conservation easements for farm land.

Response: Staff reviewed the text of the draft Plan with an eye toward strengthening the language related to "private" airstrips. Staff forwarded the suggestions of tax considerations

for future land uses and support for conservation easements to the Planning and Zoning Committee of the DeKalb County Board for discussion.

-- Richard Clausen of Sycamore, IL indicated that he would like to see the area on the south side of Mt. Hunger Road, immediately east of the Sycamore city limits, designated for residential development rather than “open space.”

Response: Planning for this area is within the City of Sycamore’s planning jurisdiction. Staff forwarded this request to the City of Sycamore Administrator.

-- Jaimie Walter of DeKalb, IL, and Elaine Larson of Pierce Township both indicated that the possible future extension of Peace Road south from Gurler Road to Perry Road should not be depicted on the Transportation Plan.

Response: The possible extension of Peace Road south to Perry Road is a long-range plan that reflects the potential growth of the City of DeKalb south in the coming decades. The City’s Comprehensive Plan calls for Industrial uses in this area. Should the area develop with manufacturing and warehousing uses, the need for a by-pass road for north- and south-bound, non-industrial traffic will eventually arise.

-- Dan Kenney of DeKalb, IL suggested that the Plan should have more of an emphasis on erosion elimination and control, as well as acknowledging existing and future cemeteries. He also suggested the Plan encourage the construction of bike lanes as part of future roads and road improvements. He opined that the pending expansion of the County landfill is at odds with the goal of preserving agricultural land.

Response: Staff reviewed the text of the draft Plan to strengthen language related to erosion control and elimination, and to acknowledge cemeteries as an important land use. The possibility of bike lanes is currently a part of the initial design for all new County roads and road improvements. Actual construction of bike lanes is dependent on funding, which is frequently inadequate. The idea that the County adopt a policy of committing additional funds to construct bike lanes when standard funding is insufficient was forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Committee of the DeKalb County Board for discussion. With respect to the possible expansion of the County landfill, staff notes that even agricultural uses require solid waste management services. The provision of a solid waste management facility is not at odds with the goal of supporting and protecting agricultural land.

-- Greg Milburg of Sycamore, IL, stated that municipal boundary agreements should not include “green zones” designated between non-adjacent boundary lines.

Response: There is no requirement that municipalities identify land located between municipal growth boundaries as “green zones.” The concern related to such designation was forwarded to the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission for discussion.

-- Kerry Mellot of Malta, IL suggested that the Future Land Use Plan should accommodate more economic growth opportunities.

Response: The Future Land Use Plan designates many areas for new residential, commercial, and industrial uses, as called for by each of the 14 municipalities that are in the County. An evaluation by staff of the outcome should these areas be build-out per the Comprehensive Plan recommendation indicates more than adequate land is earmarked for non-agricultural growth and development for at least a 20-year horizon.

-- David Segel of Elgin, IL noted that the Draft Comprehensive Plan did not include any energy planning. He felt that incorporating energy planning was an important aspect of development and that future energy innovations may improve economic and environmental conditions within the County.

Response: Staff forwarded the issue of including energy planning in the Comprehensive Plan to the Planning and Zoning Committee of the DeKalb County Board for discussion.

-- Peggy Doty of Sycamore, IL encouraged the County's efforts to conserve open space and areas for flora and fauna, especially within the flood prone areas.

Response: These same measures are contained in the draft Comprehensive Plan.

o An Open House to solicit citizen input on the draft of this Unified Comprehensive Plan was held on January 13, 2011 at the Sandwich City Hall Annex in Sandwich, IL. Approximately 11 members of the public attended the meeting. Comments received included:

-- Rich Robinson of Sandwich, IL inquired why the Transportation Plan did not depict the proposed extension of Latham Road from State Route 34 to South County Line Road.

Response: The Transportation Plan depicts only existing and future County and township roads, and does not show planned city roads.

-- Donna Brown of DeKalb, IL asked whether or not the Comprehensive Plan would include a section on the County's future energy needs. She also asked whether consideration of rail service from the DeKalb/Sycamore/Cortland area north to Genoa, where AmTrak will provide service, has been considered.

Response: The question regarding energy planning was forwarded by staff to the Planning and Zoning Committee of the DeKalb County Board. Staff evaluation of the possibility of rail service from DeKalb/Sycamore/Cortland to Genoa would be cost prohibitive given the expected ridership of the AmTrak service. However, the park and ride Objective of the Comprehensive Plan text was amended to mention its possible trips to the AmTrak service in Genoa.

-- Roy Plote of Leland, IL inquired as to the status of the proposed County-wide fiber optic network, and questioned whether the network should be depicted on the Comprehensive Plan maps.

Response: The text of the Plan mentions this important infrastructure and encourages its use. Because the Plans do not show other underground infrastructure (gas pipelines, electric lines), it was decided not to depict the fiber optic network.

-- David Frazier of Sandwich, IL expressed concern over possible conflicts that might arise with the development of single-family residences around his existing 100 acres of woods.

Response: The concern was passed on to Mayor Thomas of Sandwich, since the City would control future development in that area.

o Other public input:

-- Dan Kenney of DeKalb, IL submitted a written document with a number of suggestions for the text of the draft Comprehensive Plan.

Response: Several of the suggestions were already included in one form or another within the draft, including suggestions related to transportation, solid waste management and recycling (the issues raised are addressed in the County Solid Waste Management Plan, which is endorsed and supported by the Comprehensive Plan). The suggestion to create a citizen/County Board working group to address economic, environmental, and energy sustainability would be duplicative of existing public/government forums, including the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC). Suggestions related specifically to economic development were forwarded to the Director of the DCEDC. Suggestions related to housing were forwarded to the RPC. Suggestions related to natural resources are addressed in the draft of the Plan or are part of the Countywide Stormwater Management Plan, with the exception of creating a public utility for electricity for which the County has no resources.

-- The McHenry County Department of Planning and Development provided a thorough review of the draft update to the DeKalb County Unified Comprehensive Plan. Included in the remarks was: the observation that McHenry County is calling for an Office/Research/Industrial area in the vicinity of a potential I-90/Rte. 23 interchange; the belief that there is a growing market for local and organically grown foods on smaller farms; and the opinion that farmers will continue to want to be able to split farmhouses from the surrounding farm fields. A few typos in the text of the draft update were also noted.

Response: Staff appreciated the thorough and thoughtful comments from McHenry County. With respect to land uses around a possible future interchange at I-90 and State Rte. 23, DeKalb County's policy would continue to be to discourage non-agricultural growth and

development from occurring in unincorporated DeKalb County. This bears in no way on McHenry County's plans for lands immediately surrounding such an interchange, which would be located entirely within that County's jurisdiction. With respect to an increase in garden and organic growth on smaller farms, staff notes that there are many parcels of less than 40 acres throughout unincorporated DeKalb County which may be suitable for this use, and current zoning regulations do not discourage these types of farming activity. Indications from elected officials, stakeholders, and the general public is that the County should continue to require 40 acres or more for a farm dwelling. Finally, the typos that were noted have been corrected.