

DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

January 30, 2020

6:30 p.m.

**Lions Den, Cortland Community Park
70 S Llanos, Cortland**

AGENDA

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
- 4. Public Comments**
- 5. Resolution of Appreciation for Dan Nolan**
- 6. Annual Dues**
- 7. Member Appointments and Re-Appointments**
- 8. Census 2020 Update & Community Events – Jason Blumenthal, City of DeKalb and Aaron Lewis, Region 1 Planning Council**
- 9. DeKalb County History Center – Michelle Donahoe & Rob Glover**
- 10. GIS Infrastructure Agreement – Sheila Santos & Bruce Hamilton, DeKalb Co. IMO**
- 11. DeKalb County’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update**
 - a. 10 Things Elected Officials Should Know about Economic Development**
 - i. Review 1-3; Discuss 4.**
- 12. Municipal Development Permits / Projects / Challenges / Champions**
- 13. Next Meeting Date – 2020 Meeting Schedule**
- 14. Adjournment**

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

(June 20, 2019)

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) met on October 24, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport, 3232 Pleasant Street, in DeKalb, Illinois. In attendance were Commission Members: Cheryl Aldis, Dan Olson, John Fisher, Steve Devlieger, Martha May, Dan Nolan, Becky Morphey, Brian Gregory, and Suzanne Willis (alt). Also, in attendance were: Bill Nicklas, City Manager of City of DeKalb; Laurie Wilson, Deputy Clerk for the Village of Shabbona; Sherrie Taylor, of the NIU Center for Governmental Studies (CGS); and, County Staff members: Derek Hiland, Jolene Willis, and Marcellus Anderson.

- 1. Roll Call** – Commission members Rich Gentile, Russell Kula, Brenda Jergens, Les Redden, and Linda Swenson were absent. Members John Fisher and Brian Gregory arrived late.
- 2. Approval of Agenda** - *Ms. Morphey moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. May, and the motion carried unanimously.*
- 3. Approval of Minutes** – *Ms. Willis moved to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2019 meeting, seconded by Mr. Nolan, and the motion carried unanimously.*
- 4. Public Comments**

Bill Nicklas, City Manager for the City of DeKalb, introduced himself to the Commission, and stated that he was attending in the place of Mayor Jerry Smith. He informed the Commission about the history of the Airport, its connection to the City, and the plans for the future of the airport. Mr. Nicklas also mentioned that he would going around to visit some of the member communities regarding a couple of the projects within the DeKalb County Enterprise Zone, with the goal of seeking resolutions of support from the communities for these projects.

5. Presentation – What the Census Means for Each Community, by Sherrie Taylor

Sherrie Taylor, of the NIU CGS, gave a presentation regarding the importance of community involvement with the upcoming 2020 Federal Census. She started by noting that she was working with the State Data Center Network (SDC), which works with the US Census Bureau, and explained its history and the purpose it serves. She then elaborated on why the census is important, highlighting the ways it affects communities in terms of public monies and political power/representation. She then explored the differences between the original “Long Form” versus the new “Short Form”, in particular the removal of questions regarding citizenship. Ms.

Taylor explained about hard-to-count populations, and their impacts on the census counts. She talked about challenges in getting good census counts, and the new changes, such as online filing, which is being implemented for the first time. Ms. Taylor emphasized that DeKalb County needs to maintain a population greater than 100,000, and elaborated on the potential effects of the DeKalb County census coming back under that number. Ms. Taylor talked about a grant that is available for libraries, approximately \$5,000, for use in setting up computers for online census filing. She then warned about the presence of scammers pretending to be census takers, and gave some examples of these scams. She finished her discussion by encouraging the members to apply for and work at the Census Bureau, highlighting their need for lots of temporary workers, and providing her contact information, in case anyone had any further questions.

6. Community Partner Program Update

Mr. Hiland noted that the Commission Packet contained a listing of the community pairings, and explained how the pairings were developed. He reminded the Commission members that this program was intended to be an ongoing one designed to help the members learn more about their fellow communities in the County.

7. DeKalb County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update

Mr. Hiland talked the “homework” from the “10 Things ...” article, explaining that it was a way for the member communities to self-evaluate and share with each other the unique and special elements of their communities. Ms. Aldis commented about the amount of work that would go into gathering the information and inquired as to ways to encourage others to help with gathering the information. Mr. Hiland explained the goals that the CED teams were working towards and how it may be used. He elaborated on the need for DeKalb County and its communities to separate and establish themselves an identity distinct from out neighboring counties. Mr. Gregory noted that the “10 Things ...” exercise is a good one for helping to develop community identity.

Mr. Hiland talked about the newly formed Mayors Forum that had recently begun to meet.

8. Municipal Development Permits / Projects / Challenges / Champions

Mr. Gregory (Sycamore) reported that the Old Mill Park, a fifty-five and older assisted living facility, was under construction on property across from the Sycamore Middle School, along State Route 23, noting that seven or eight units have been sold so far with more having been reserved. He also added that phase 1 of the project will have forty-eight units and phase 2 will have fifty-

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

two units. Mr. Gregory reported that interest has been shown in the Rural Residential development, containing lots of three or more acres, on the northwest side of the City. He noted that both Seymours of Sycamore and Suters were in the process of expanding, and that a new high-end welding company was coming to Sycamore. Mr. Gregory finished by noting that the construction of the new Meijers on Peace Road was underway.

Mr. Devlieger (Kirkland) reported the Village had no new permits, but that a couple of projects were in the works, noting that the old grocery store was being torn down and the Village was looking to have something new erected in its place, and that they were working with a bank to open a new branch in the Village. He also added that the Village needed to remediate its pumps.

Ms. May (Lee) reported that the Village had taken down a second dilapidated house. She noted that while the Village did not currently have a website, but that they were working on getting one in place. She noted that the Village was trying to plant some trees, but were having issues with drain pipes in the locations they wanted to plant them. Ms. May also noted that the Lions Club was also looking to plant some trees in the community.

Mr. Olson (DeKalb) reported that the City was working on amending the City's Ordinance to address recreational cannabis businesses. He noted that the City's Planning and Zoning Commission had recommended approval, with some changes, and that dispensaries, recreational and medical, would be allowed. He reported that the matter would be going before the City Council on Monday, October 28. Mr. Olson noted that they had also received an application for a medical cannabis dispensary on Peace Road, which has had a hearing and would be going before the City Council in November. He then informed the Commission that the State cannabis regulations would take effect January 1st, and that the State would be issuing seventy-five licenses state-wide starting on May 1st. He noted that DeKalb County was part of a ten-county area that would be receiving just three of these licenses. Ms. Aldis confirmed this information and added that the State was giving preference to locations where medical dispensaries currently existed. Mr. Orton noted that follow-up legislation is expected to occur in the coming months to iron out some issues. He noted that the City was going to have dispensaries as a Special Use in their commercial districts. Mr. Orton reported that the demolition on the Mooney property on 4th Street would be starting soon. He noted the industrial project between I-88 and Gurler Road had been approved by the Commission, and would be going before the Council on Monday, October 28th. Mr. Orton also noted that they City did have a Complete Count Committee.

Ms. Aldis (Cortland) reported that the town had two more townhouses, which were starting to close on units, noting that the townhouses had ten units each. She noted that single-family homes were still going up in the Nature's Crossing development. Ms. Aldis reported that that the

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

Town was working with the County Highway Department on a sidewalk replacement program along Somonauk Road, which was mostly finished. She also noted that the Town had its own road program underway. Ms. Aldis noted that the residential roof solar panels were coming in, and talked about some of the issues they were having. Ms. Aldis inquired about the status of the Cortland Solar 1 community solar project along North Avenue. Mr. Hiland responded by describing some of the issues that had arisen regarding things ComEd was asking these projects to do and how it conflicted with the requirements of the Special Use permits issued by the County. He did add that the Cortland Solar 1 project was currently going through the County's Site Development Permit process.

Mr. Fisher (Kingston) reported that they had no new residential dwelling permits, but that they have started to see applications for residential solar permits. He noted that a champion was that the Village was still working on their DCCF grant, and that a challenge was in getting better participation from the citizens.

Ms. Morphey (Somonauk) reported that they had two solar farms, the one in unincorporated DeKalb County and one in the Village limits. She noted that the Village has met with the company building on the school property in the Village several times and that they were sending out notices to the residents. She also mentioned that the old high school gym was purchased and was being turned into the Somonauk Recreation Center, and that it would be opening on November 9th.

Mr. Nolan (Shabbona) reported that the Village had eighteen building permits. He reported that the ITEP Committee for a downtown streetscape project had held two public informational meetings, which were had decent attendance, approximately forty-eight people for the first one and fourteen at the second. He noted that they had conceptual drawings for the public to look at, and that they would be taking the public's comments on the drawings back to their next meeting with Fehr-Graham and IDOT to incorporate into the plan. Mr. Nolan reported that the work on the Sewer plant was almost complete. He reported that a prominent village resident had pledged money to install new playground equipment. Mr. Nolan then noted that as for challenges, public opinion and education was an issue, educating the public with the right information. He did note that the staff had done a nice job keeping the Village webpage updated with current information. Ms. Laurie Wilson mentioned that the Village would be having a new community Christmas festival and that they had a lot of participation from residents and local organizations in preparing for it. Mr. Nolan finished by announcing that that he would no longer be the serving on the Commission, and introduced Ms. Wilson, who would be taking his place on the Commission.

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

Mr. Hiland (DeKalb County) reported that the County was working on the formation of new regulations for cannabis-related businesses, and talked about the steps and efforts that County had been taking regarding this issue. He noted that the County was investigating the possibility of establishing a solar installation for its own use. He reminded the Commission that the County had updated its Building Codes to the 2015 Series, and offered the County as a resource for any communities considering looking at updating their building codes. He also mentioned that the County would be begin requiring Demolition Permits as of January 1st, and described why the County decided to begin requiring them.

Ms. Jolene Willis reminded the Commission of the importance of the upcoming 2020 Census, emphasizing the need for communities to establish Complete County Committees. She also reported that the County had applied for a Sub-Recipient Grant to help with marketing and promotion. She then talked about the steps needed to set up a Complete Count Committee. Mr. Hiland highlighted two key items that the Commission members should take away from the 2020 Census discussion: the idea that each person represents approximately \$1,800 in monies; and, the opportunity for funding for local libraries.

9. Next Meeting Date

Ms. Aldis offered to host the next Commission meeting in Cortland. The Commission decided that their next meeting will be held on January 23 or 30, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. in Cortland, at the Park Building, with Ms. Aldis noting that she would have to confirm which date the venue would be available.

10. Adjournment – Ms. Morphey motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Gregory, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Aldis
Chair, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission

Moa: moa
P:\Zoning\Regional\Minutes\2019\RPC 10-24-19 Minutes.docx

Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.

DEKALB COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION

**IN APPRECIATION OF DAN NOLAN
REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE VILLAGE OF SHABBONA**

WHEREAS, on April 17, 2002, the DeKalb County Board and 13 municipalities within its borders adopted intergovernmental agreements and created the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission, which is a cooperative effort between the County and the municipalities to identify, evaluate and cooperate on issues of regional importance; and

WHEREAS, Dan Nolan served as the sole representative from the Village of Shabbona to the Regional Planning Commission from September 2017 thru January 2020, and has played an important role in the Commission by virtue of his contributions of time, attention, care, questions, input and perspectives; and

WHEREAS, as a consequence of Dan Nolan's efforts on behalf of the Village of Shabbona, the Village has benefitted from information on numerous growth and development trends, issues, and techniques raised at the Commission meetings, while the other member communities in the Regional Planning Commission have benefitted from the information, advice and contributions from the Village of Shabbona provided by Mr. Nolan; and

WHEREAS, following Mr. Nolan's resignation from the Regional Planning Commission at the end of the January 30, 2020 meeting as he enjoys retirement, the Regional Planning Commission wishes to commemorate Mr. Nolan's role and participation in the Commission during the period he served;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE OF DEKALB COUNTY, ILLINOIS, as follows:

The DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission does hereby acknowledge and express its deep gratitude for the time and effort generously volunteered by Dan Nolan on behalf of the citizens of the Village of Shabbona and of the County as a whole for the years served between September 2017 and January of 2020.

PASSED BY THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION THIS 30TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2020, A.D.

Chairman, DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission



DeKalb County
Regional Planning Commission
110 East Sycamore Street
Sycamore, IL 60178
(815) 895-7188
www.dekalbcounty.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Planning Commission

FROM: Derek M. Hiland
Regional Planning Commission Director

DATE: January 24, 2020

SUBJECT: Annual Dues -- 2020

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) voted in 2007 to assess annual dues to its member communities. For the past 13 years the Communities of DeKalb County have continually supported the efforts of the RPC. These dues are intended to offset the County's costs of providing staffing, meeting room and materials. An invoice will be sent the week of January 27, 2020 to each member community for the \$500 dues. Dues are requested to be received by the end of February 2020. Staff appreciates members' attention to this detail.

DMH:dmh

P:\Zoning\Regional\StaffRpts\2020\FY20dues.01-20.docx



DeKalb County
Regional Planning Commission
110 East Sycamore Street
Sycamore, IL 60178
(815) 895-7188
www.dekalbcounty.org

TO: Regional Planning Commissioners

DATE: January 24, 2020

SUBJECT: Re-appointment of Members

By consent of the members of the Regional Planning Commission, member terms are staggered by one-, two- and three-year terms. The following member's terms are due to expire in April of 2020:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Alternate</u>
Town of Genoa	Rich Gentile	Alyssa Seguss
Village of Kingston	John Fischer	open
Village of Kirkland	Steve DeVlieger	Ryan Block
Village of Maple Park	Liz Peerboom	Kathleen Curtis
Village of Somonauk	Becky Morphey	open
DeKalb County	Steve Faivre	Suzanne Willis

These individuals are requested to work with their city council/village board to forward in writing to County Board Chairman Mark Pietrowski, Jr. the names of a representative to the Regional Planning Commission and an alternate. The names of the member representative and an alternate need to be received no later than March 31, 2020, so that the County Board Chairman can make appoints at the April 15, 2020 meeting of the DeKalb County Board. Once appointed, terms will be for a two or three-year period.

DMH:dh

P:\Zoning\Regional\StaffRpts\2020\2020Member.reappnt.01-20.docx

**DeKalb County
Regional Planning Commission**

110 East Sycamore Street
Sycamore, IL 60178
(815) 895-7188
Fax: (815) 895-1669

January 10, 2020

re: Re-appointment of Regional Planning Commission Representative

Dear Madams and Sirs:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the term of _____ as the representative of _____ to the DeKalb County Regional Planning Commission will expire on April 1, 2020. Participation by _____ has been an important part of the function of the Regional Planning Commission, and the Commission and governments that make up its membership look forward to continued representation from your community.

Please forward the names of a primary and secondary representative for the to serve a three-year term on the Regional Planning Commission to:

Mark Pietrowski, Jr.
DeKalb County Board Chairman
200 N. Main Street
Sycamore, IL 60178

The County Board Chairman needs to receive your nomination no later than March 31, 2020 so that the appointment can be made at the April 15, 2020 meeting of the DeKalb County Board.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call me at the above number.

Thank you for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Derek M. Hiland
Regional Planning Commission Director

cc: Regional Planning Commission Member

DMH:dh

THE ROLE OF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

10 Things You Should Know

Christiana McFarland

Director
Finance and Economic Development Program
National League of Cities

Katie Seeger

Senior Associate
Finance and Economic Development Program
National League of Cities



INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL



The *Role of Local Elected Officials in Economic Development: 10 Things you Should Know* was the result of a partnership between the National League of Cities Center for Research and Innovation and the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). IEDC staff were instrumental in facilitating a series of input sessions with economic development officials during their conferences in October 2009 and February 2010. IEDC staff also reviewed the guide and provided constructive feedback. NLC also recognizes the direct input and guidance provided by members of IEDC, members of NLC's CityFutures Panel on Community and Regional Development, and other local officials.

About the National League of Cities

The National League of Cities is the nation's oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. NLC is a resource and advocate for more than 1,600 member cities and the 49 state municipal leagues, representing 19,000 cities and towns and more than 218 million Americans.

Through its **Center for Research and Innovation**, NLC provides research and analysis on key topics and trends important to cities, creative solutions to improve quality of life in communities, inspiration and ideas for local officials to use in tackling tough issues, and opportunities for city leaders to connect with peers, share experiences, and learn about innovative approaches in cities.

About the International Economic Development Council

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is the premier membership organization dedicated to helping economic development professionals create high-quality jobs, develop vibrant communities and improve the quality of life in their regions. Serving more than 4,600 members, IEDC represents the largest network of economic development professionals in the world. IEDC provides a diverse range of services, including conferences, certification, professional development, publications, research, advisory services and legislative tracking.

About the Authors

Christiana McFarland is the director of the Finance and Economic Development Program in the Center for Research and Innovation at the National League of Cities. Katie Seeger is senior associate in the Finance and Economic Development Program. Caitlin Geary, finance and economic development fellow, also contributed to the guide.

William Woodwell, editorial consultant, and Lara Malakoff, NLC senior program associate for outreach, provided editorial assistance, and Alexander Clarke, NLC manager of creative design and production, designed and managed the production of the report.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
1. Your local economic strengths and weaknesses	5
City Example: San Buenaventura, Calif. (Ventura)	
2. Your community's place in the broader regional economy	7
3. Your community's economic development vision and goals	9
City Example: Mission, Kan.	
4. Your community's strategy to attain its goals	11
City Example: Littleton, Colo.	
5. Connections between economic development and other city policies	13
City Example: Economic Prosperity Element, San Diego, Calif.	
6. Your regulatory environment	15
7. Your local economic development stakeholders and partners	17
City Example: Garland, Texas	
8. The needs of your local business community	19
City Example: New York, New York	
9. Your community's economic development message	21
10. Your economic development staff	23
Conclusion	25

Introduction

Economic development is the process of building strong, adaptive economies. Strategies driven by local assets and realities, a diverse industry base and a commitment to equality of opportunity and sustainable practices have emerged as those that will ensure a strong foundation for long-term stability and growth. Even within the parameters of these principles, what constitutes success in economic development and the specific strategies to accomplish it will look different from place to place. Despite these differences, leadership is consistently identified as a critical factor in effective economic development.

Dedicated leadership is needed to raise awareness, help develop and communicate a common vision, and motivate stakeholders into action. Although leadership can come from many places within the community, local elected officials are particularly well-positioned to take on this role. The political influence of elected leadership is critical to helping communities stay the course toward a vibrant economic future. From the bully pulpit to the design and coordination of public policies, mayors and councilmembers have opportunities every day to effect change and promote a strategic vision of economic growth for their community.

The goal of this guide is not to provide a one-size-fits-all solution to economic development or even to offer an Economic Development 101. Nor does this guide contend that elected officials should be economic development experts. The goal is instead to identify fundamental ways elected officials can become informed and strategic decision-makers who can connect the policy “dots,” be effective communicators and take a leadership role in economic development. The guide is based on the premise that elected officials can and should actively participate in and lead long-term development strategies that make sense for their community.

The format of the guide is a “top 10 list” of things elected officials should know about economic development in order to be effective leaders. These include:

- 1. Your local economic strengths and weaknesses.** A stronger understanding of your community’s economic profile will help you create a realistic vision and strategies for economic development.
- 2. Your community’s place in the broader regional economy.** With a firmer grasp of how your community fits into the broader region, you’re better prepared to work with other jurisdictions to share responsibility for regional economic success.
- 3. Your community’s economic development vision and goals.** Local elected officials can play a key role in building consensus for a vision and goals that provide clear direction for local economic development.
- 4. Your community’s strategy to attain its goals.** A strategic approach means linking economic development goals to specific activities, allocating a budget and staff to these activities and evaluating performance based on measurable outcomes.
- 5. Connections between economic development and other city policies.** When crafting economic development policies, it is essential to consider how other city policies (e.g., transportation or housing) affect your economic development goals.

- 6. Your regulatory environment.** Your community's regulatory process should allow for timely, reliable and transparent resolution of issues facing businesses, while still remaining true to your long-term economic development vision.
- 7. Your local economic development stakeholders and partners.** Local officials should think strategically on a project-by-project basis about who needs to be involved, the resources they bring to the table, and what it will take to get them engaged.
- 8. The needs of your local business community.** Local officials can help create an environment that supports the growth and expansion of local businesses, primarily by opening lines of communication.
- 9. Your community's economic development message.** You will want a clear, accurate and compelling message that reflects your local vision and that helps ensure broad support for economic development projects undertaken by the city and its partners.
- 10. Your economic development staff.** Local elected officials will be more effective in leading economic development activities to the extent that they forge strong relationships with staff members who work on these issues on a daily basis.

1. Your Local Economic Strengths and Weaknesses

Your community's strengths and weaknesses, such as quality-of-life amenities, infrastructure and workforce skills, determine the potential of your local economy to support economic growth. This economic profile lays the foundation for creating a realistic vision and strategic direction for economic success that is unique to your community. Information about your local economy can also help engage and educate constituents and build community support for economic development decisions.

ASSESSING YOUR LOCAL ECONOMY

IMPORTANT FACTORS	KEY INDICATORS
Economic conditions	Unemployment, types and sizes of firms/industries, wages, income, new business starts, retail sales, housing prices, types of imports and exports, number of businesses closed
Population characteristics	Population size and growth, age, education level
Labor force characteristics	Labor force participation, occupations, skills, commuter characteristics, productivity
Physical conditions	Land use, zoning, land values, condition of buildings, vacancy rates, building activity, parking facilities, condition and capacity of infrastructure, air and water quality
Business climate	Community attitudes, labor relations, business taxes and regulations, level and quality of municipal services, workforce training, access to and cost of capital, public and private infrastructure
Knowledge-based resources	Federal labs, science and research parks, industry incubators, colleges and universities, technical training schools
Quality of life	Housing availability, public services, education system, crime rate, cultural and recreational activities, parks and other natural amenities
<small>Source: <i>Economic Development Strategic Planning</i>. International Economic Development Council, Washington, D.C., 2006, pp. 44-48.</small>	

With the assistance of your economic development staff and input from stakeholders, you can identify factors within and outside of the control of local government that impact and shape your local economy. Identifying strengths and opportunities is crucial, but local officials also should pay attention to weaknesses and potential threats.

For example, what industries in your community and region are growing or struggling? What are the skills of your workforce, and are they sufficient to meet the needs of business? What barriers and sup-

port services exist for local entrepreneurs and small businesses? Is the local and regional housing stock diverse enough to provide for a wide range of housing needs?

All of these factors should be understood in comparison to other communities and in the context of broader economic trends. As a result of this process, you will have a stronger sense of your unique local assets, as well as what you can and should be doing to build on strengths and mitigate weaknesses.

Taking Action, Asking Questions

- What unique strengths can your community build on for economic development and growth?
- What weaknesses pose a barrier to economic development? To what extent can you mitigate these weaknesses – and how?
- How do your community’s strengths and weaknesses compare to those in other communities?
- How are economic conditions changing in your city and region?

San Buenaventura, Calif. (Ventura) (population 109,000)

After many decades of slow economic growth, the traditionally blue-collar City of San Buenaventura began to realize that its anti-business reputation had actually been undermining its economic prosperity. The city had very few middle class jobs and a limited industrial base and service sector. Moreover, many high-tech firms were heavily concentrated in much of the city’s surrounding area and seemed to bypass Ventura when making location decisions.

Through an analysis of the community’s strengths and weaknesses, city leaders in Ventura determined that the city’s location between two high-tech hubs, its pool of entrepreneurs and venture capitalists and significant quality of life amenities placed them in a unique position to expand high growth technology sectors. The city developed and pursued a strategic plan for economic development, including new activities to increase the local tax base, diversify the economy and create high value, high wage jobs.

The city created a self-sustaining fund to support the new plan, specifically growth of businesses from within the community, by using a \$5 million loan payoff from the Redevelopment Agency. The Jobs Investment Fund (JIF) provides “mezzanine capital” to expansion projects or venture capital to new projects as either loans or direct investments. JIF, managed by a private investment partner, allows for a higher return potential to the city than is traditionally available with a standard investment portfolio.

Constituents have expressed concern that the city has too great a risk exposure in these investments. “There are requests that we redirect the money from the fund back to general government operations each time we face additional budget cuts, but due to political will and improved communications with our constituents, so far we have been able to maintain funding,” said Councilmember Neal Andrews. City leaders have made a special effort to bring community opinion leaders into a position where they understand what JIF is about and why it’s important.

JIF has allowed the city to engage in a number of business development activities, including capital raising conferences, entrepreneurship events and a business incubator. As of January 2010, 10 firms have located in the incubator, and in 2008, Forbes magazine ranked Ventura number 68 on the “Small Business list of 100 best places to live and launch a business.”

Contact:

City of Ventura
Department of Economic Development
Phone: (805) 677-3935

2. Your Community's Place In The Broader Regional Economy

Understanding your local economy also means knowing how your community fits into the broader region. Although increased competition for jobs, tax base and private investment can put political pressure on elected officials to go toe-to-toe with neighboring jurisdictions, the reality is that local economic success depends on regional economic success.

This is particularly true in the context of the global economy, where economic competition may not be with your neighbor, but with a city in China, India or Ireland. Firms engaged in global economic activity rely on a breadth of resources available in a region, including workers, transportation, housing, and amenities. In nearly all cases, one community does not have full capacity needed to support these activities. Cities that focus on competition within the region, instead of collaborating for economic development, are placing their economic future at risk.

With a firmer grasp of your community's place in the region, you're better prepared to work with other jurisdictions to share responsibility for promoting regional economic success. Cities in the Denver region, for example, work together to draw businesses and other economic activity to the region while agreeing not to compete or offer incentives to firms to locate in their specific communities. Similarly, many cities work together on regional marketing efforts, typically via participation in a regional council. These collaborative efforts attract firms, investment, and employment that benefit the entire region.

Participating in regional activities may present some political difficulties if the local economic benefits are not well understood by your constituents. Local elected officials should be prepared with the facts about how regional economic success translates into improved employment opportunities, tax base, or amenities for your city and the people who live there. Local officials can work with their staff to craft a clear, accurate message about their involvement in regional activities, and communicate this message to community through the media, neighborhood meetings or other public venues. It can serve as a starting point for a community dialogue about the importance of regional collaboration to local success.

"Too many local governments still act as if they have the luxury of merely competing with each other for tax base, especially within their region. But economically this is a sideshow or a delusion. The real economic competition is global and competing effectively requires regional collaboration."

William Barnes, *The Economic Development Game Has Changed*, Nation's Cities Weekly, 1/11/2010

Taking Action, Asking Questions

- How do you define your economic region?
- How does the economic strength of your city depend on what happens in other cities and towns in the region? How does regional economic activity provide direct or indirect benefits to your community?
- What assets does your community contribute to the regional economy (e.g., workers, housing, amenities, transportation)?
- What regional organizations, partnerships and/or activities already exist? To what extent is your community involved?

3. Your Community's Economic Development Vision and Goals

A primary challenge in the practice of economic development is choosing among many competing priorities and various activities. A clear economic vision and goals are needed to provide a framework for strategically assessing and coordinating these efforts. The vision stems from the community's values, its collective sense of local economic strengths and weaknesses, and consensus on a desired future. Goals are more tangible expressions of the vision and provide specific direction for actions.

For example, the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico's economic development initiative "thrive!ABQ" identifies the city's economic vision as a city with a vibrant business climate that's accessible, user-friendly and welcoming to all. The three primary goals of "thrive!ABQ" are:

- Albuquerque First: Retain existing businesses and industries by fostering partnerships with local businesses and increasing spending in the community.
- Albuquerque Easy: Remove barriers to conducting business within the city.
- Albuquerque Recruits: Make the city an attractive place for businesses to locate.

According to the American Planning Association's *Economic Development Toolbox* (2006), a sound economic vision and goals should:

1. Balance what the jurisdiction would like to achieve with what resources and public support the jurisdiction can realistically expect to muster in support of that vision.
2. Be consistent with the role of the jurisdiction's economy in the larger regional and state economies.
3. Be understandable to citizens without technical training or experience in economic development.
4. Be produced in a way that makes it possible to incorporate it in the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.

If your city already has an economic development vision, make sure your policy decisions reflect the principles in the vision. In cities that do not have an economic vision, local elected officials can help initiate a community visioning effort. A well-designed visioning process will surface an array of ideas, opinions and objectives from a diverse group of stakeholders. An important role for elected officials is to help bring people to consensus and agreement on a common purpose.

"There are many possible economic futures for any given jurisdiction, there are some impossible ones as well. The challenge is to decide on a future that is not only desirable, but also possible given the factors that constrain it."

Terry Moore, Stuart Meck, and James Ebenhoh. *An Economic Development Toolbox*. American Planning Association, Washington, D.C. October 2006, p. 34

Taking Action, Asking Questions

- Does your community have a clearly stated vision and goals for economic development? If so, what are they?
- Does the vision reflect the community's values as well as its strengths and weaknesses?
- Do your constituents and key stakeholders understand and agree upon the community's vision and goals?
- To what extent do local government policies support the vision and goals?

Mission, Kan. (population 9,727)

Mission, a community less than three square miles in area, was at a crossroads when many large parcels of land became available for redevelopment. In response, the city began a planning process that involved all facets of the community, including residents, businesses and shoppers, to create a vision that would serve as the framework for future development. The vision, which ultimately called for more compact, walkable, and sustainable development, was challenged when Mission was offered a lucrative deal by a big-box developer.

With a strong commitment to the vision, Mission denied the big-box store and has accepted an offer for a new mall from a developer who has embraced the city's vision for a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use destination. Although the developer typically works on retail projects only, his collaboration with the city and understanding of the community vision has led him to include residential, hotel, office and entertainment as potential project components.

The city's resolve to stick with its vision also resulted in overwhelming community support for the project. Instead of Not in My Back Yard opposition, city officials received acclamation from those attending its Planning and Zoning hearings. Among the most common questions the city received from residents: "When will the project be complete?"

Contact:

City of Mission
Department of Community Development
Phone: (913) 676-8350
E-mail: MRivarola@missionks.org

4. Your Community's Strategy To Attain Its Goals

Once the economic development vision and goals are defined, it is important that they not be shelved, but that they guide and determine your community's economic development strategy. If the community has been involved in the process and believes in the vision and goals, residents will hold political leadership accountable for putting them into practice. Strategic implementation of the economic development vision involves linking economic development goals to specific activities, allocating a budget and staff to these activities, and evaluating performance based on specific, measurable, agreed-upon outcomes.

There are many local activities that can be used to accomplish your city's long-term economic vision. The types of economic development policies and tools pursued by your community will depend on those permitted by your state, as well as how your local government perceives its role in stimulating private sector economic activity.

The traditional local government role in economic development is to facilitate economic activity by offsetting the cost of doing business in your community (in terms of time, opportunity and money). Strategies include land assembly, modifying the permitting process and providing job training. More entrepreneurial roles, as well as strategies that more directly address the demand for local products, may include seeding and investing in local small businesses, matching gaps in supplier/buyer linkages and international trade promotion. Local elected officials can work with city staff, businesses and other stakeholders in the community to educate themselves about the types of programs and tools that are available to them and to decide which economic development role is best for their city.

You can also look to "best practices" in other communities; however, it is important to remember that economic development activities that work in one place will not necessarily work in another. Following economic development fads or strictly replicating another city's approach without putting it in the context of your community is a recipe for failure. Instead, elected officials can learn how and why another city was successful and adapt those practices to local realities.

Elected officials should also work with their staff to determine a set of expected outcomes, the necessary level of resources (staff and budget) needed to achieve these outcomes and performance metrics to evaluate and measure them. In the context of short-term political cycles, it may be tempting to stray from the strategy and only consider economic development in terms of traditional, more tangible successes, such as attracting a new, large employer. For this reason, it is important that elected officials and staff agree upon, are committed to and accurately measure even *incremental* economic achievements. This will allow political leaders to demonstrate success and champion all various ways the community is supporting economic activity.

Strategic implementation of economic development, from selecting activities that support the vision to accurately measuring progress, enables local governments to be more responsive in an increasingly complex and uncertain economic environment. It allows the community, staff and elected officials to be part of a "continuum" of leadership and to make more deliberate progress toward long-term economic success.

Taking Action, Asking Questions

- How do your goals drive everyday actions to develop and grow your local economy? Can you develop better strategies, if needed, which make sense for your community?
- What is the general orientation of your local government toward supporting private sector economic activity? What tools is your city willing to and able to use?
- Is your city's budget and staffing aligned with its strategies for economic development?
- How will you measure and evaluate your city's economic development efforts over time?
- What can you do to celebrate incremental successes?

Littleton, Colo. (population 43,055)

In 1987, the City of Littleton pioneered an entrepreneurial alternative to the traditional economic development practice of recruiting industries. The "economic gardening" program, developed in conjunction with the Center for the New West, is an effort to grow local jobs through entrepreneurial activity.

The approach is based on research that indicates the great majority of all new jobs in any local economy are produced by small, local businesses already in the community. According to Chris Gibbons, Littleton's director of business/industry, an entrepreneurial approach to economic development has several advantages over attraction strategies. First, the cost per job is much less than the \$250,000 to \$300,000 incentives typical in major relocations. Second, the investment is in the community and its infrastructure; should a business choose to leave, it does not take that investment with it. Third, it is a healthier approach in that a community's future is no longer tied to the whims of an out of state company. Its future is entirely a function of its own efforts and investments.

Littleton's economic strategy focuses on creating a nurturing environment for entrepreneurs and "second-stage" companies, those with 10-99 employees and/or \$750,000-\$50 million in receipts. In a typical engagement, the city's Economic Gardening team will assist a company with core strategy, market analysis, competitor intelligence, and other priority tasks. Since the start of the program, Littleton's job base has grown from 15,000 to 30,000, the retail sales tax has tripled from \$6 million to \$21 million, and the population has grown by 23 percent.

Contact:

City of Littleton
Business/Industry Affairs
Phone: (303) 795-3749