

---

# CITY OF DEKALB: 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

*Economic Development Implementation Strategies*

SEPTEMBER 2017

---



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December, 2016 the City of DeKalb began developing an implementation plan as a follow-up to the [DeKalb 2025 Strategic Plan](#) (released February, 2016). The implementation plan focuses on the economic development aspects of the 2025 Strategic Plan. Among the five distinct visions outlined in the 2025 Strategic Plan, two focused on economic development:

- » ***A Sense of Place:** DeKalb is proudly known as a welcoming, safe, and vibrant city offering economic, educational, social, cultural, and recreational opportunities for everyone.*
- » ***Community Vitality and a Vibrant Downtown:** DeKalb's neighborhoods, the downtown, and NIU's campus are interconnected in a dynamic interplay of energy and creativity that retains and attracts businesses with living-wage jobs.*

Each vision has several goals. Those most closely related to economic development are:

- » Support place-making in DeKalb's neighborhoods, downtown, at entrance gateways, the airport, and on campus.
- » Bridge NIU and the city, whenever feasible, to create a mutually beneficial environment.
- » Position downtown DeKalb for long-term success.
- » Facilitate a business-friendly environment that supports existing merchants while attracting new investment to areas in need of commercial development.
- » Create an attractive climate for commercial and industrial investment.

The City of DeKalb reconstituted its Economic Development Commission ([EDC](#)) in October, 2016 to advise the City on economic development activities. The EDC, which also includes ex-officio commissioners, represents major industries in DeKalb such as real estate and development, retail, tourism, education, hospitality and civic organizations. The EDC's role is to ascertain and distill opinions from community leaders, provide recommendations to the DeKalb City Council on business climate policies, and assist in business retention and recruitment strategies. **The EDC currently includes:**

### EDC Members

- » Trixy O'Flaherty, EDC Chair, Gordon Hardware
- » Dr. Vernese Edghill-Walden, NIU
- » Dr. Steven Glasgow, Midwest Orthopedic Institute

- » David Barrow, DAAHA
- » Tom DeVries, Nestle
- » Mohammed Labadi, The Huddle
- » Mark Sawyer, RVG Commercial

### Ex-Officio EDC Members

- » Paul Borek, DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation
- » Matt Duffy, DeKalb Chamber of Commerce
- » Bob Snow, Council Liaison to the EDC

City of DeKalb staff:

- » Anne Marie Gaura, DeKalb City Manager
- » Jason Michnick, DeKalb Economic Development Planner

In order to prioritize the economic development components of the 2025 plan, operationalize many of the strategies identified, as well as discuss any new opportunities that have surfaced since the plan was released, the City asked Northern Illinois University (NIU) Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) to facilitate the creation of an economic development implementation plan. Several important steps were involved including collecting data related to DeKalb's economic development climate, surveying EDC members to gather their input on economic development related activities in the city, and facilitating three EDC planning sessions to ultimately prioritize strategies/projects for the City.

The EDC worked with a list of projects drawn from DeKalb's 2025 Strategic Plan and added several projects that were important but were developed after the initial plan was completed. The EDC was asked to begin the process of by developing guidelines for project prioritization.

The projects were prioritized based on how difficult each would be to implement, the potential impact on the city, and the level of support from city officials and the community. The prioritized list is divided into tiers with Tier 1 representing the highest in priority followed by Tiers 2 and 3.

Within each priority grouping, projects are listed according to short-, medium-, long-term and ongoing timeframes, as described below:

- » Short-Term: Project could start this fiscal year;
- » Medium-Term: Project could start in 1-2 years;
- » Long-Term: Project could start in 3-4 years;
- » Ongoing: Project could start this year or later with ongoing efforts over many years

It is anticipated that clear achievements will be evident within 12-24 months of start dates for all projects. Developing an action plan for the prioritized projects is the next step in implementing the 2025 Strategic Plan.

The EDC recognizes that collaboration among the City, NIU, local businesses, and other stakeholders will be necessary to implement many of the items in the 2025 Strategic Plan. In addition, professional expertise and funding from a variety of sources may be needed. The City of DeKalb staff will establish an action plan that addresses responsibilities, funding sources, opportunities for collaboration, and other components necessary to implement the prioritized projects recommended by the EDC. After approval by the DeKalb EDC and City Council, this plan will be available to guide the City’s economic development initiatives.

**FINAL PRIORITIZED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

	<b>PROJECT/STRATEGY</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<b>TIER 1</b>	Strengthen collaboration between NIU and DeKalb including implementing a Streetscape/NIU Connector	Short-Term
	Support the Arts, Culture and Entertainment (ACE) Corridor and continue to evaluate improvements to the Egyptian Theatre	Short-Term
	Develop, beautify, and add attractions to downtown and west of downtown to Annie Glidden	Short-Term
	Market DeKalb assets such as city-owned property and the airport and create and/or improve an expanded city-wide event calendar	Ongoing
<b>TIER 2</b>	Identify new commercial development opportunities and service needs such as food, beverage and entertainment focused on shared use by community and students	Short-Term
	Revitalize Annie Glidden N. Corridor	Medium-Term
	Pursue an NIU/DeKalb technology initiative including a research park west of the NIU Convocation Center	Medium-Term
	Foster an environment for entrepreneurial success such as a virtual incubator, co-working space, traditional small business incubator, and other support	Short-Term
	Continue investigating the feasibility of a STEAM Center	Short-Term
	Help develop a pipeline of skilled employees through strategic partnerships	Ongoing
	Attract living wage jobs	Ongoing
Improve communication to residents, businesses, and visitors through traditional and social media channels	Short-Term	
<b>TIER 3</b>	Develop DeKalb food systems in collaboration with local food providers and producers	Short-Term
	Enhance recruitment and retention strategies for businesses	Short-Term
	Encourage residential growth	Ongoing
	Encourage exploration of a hotel/conference center	Long-Term
	Revitalize S. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street and E. Lincoln Corridors	Long-Term
Develop a long-term vision for Peace Road	Long-Term	

## INTRODUCTION

The organization of this report is based on the process the Economic Development Commission (EDC) carried out to arrive at the prioritized implementation strategies. There were three implementation planning sessions facilitated by staff from Northern Illinois University (NIU) Center for Governmental Studies (CGS).

- » Session one oriented the EDC members to the 2025 Strategic Plan, updated them on progress to date for implementing various components of the Plan focused on economic development, and provided an overview of DeKalb’s economic environment. At the conclusion of session one, EDC members were provided with data and information on each of the economic development projects from the 2025 Strategic Plan electronically and asked to score projects based on a set of criteria.
- » The objective of session two was to discuss the commissioners’ initial thoughts on project prioritization, share additional information and arrive at a consensus on a refined prioritized project list. This list would then form the basis for the implementation strategies.
- » Lastly, session three addressed the request of the commissioners for information on innovative approaches taken by other communities to address some of the same ideas included in the 2025 Strategic Plan. These ideas could then be incorporated into DeKalb’s plans, if desired. A detailed discussion of each session, and the recommendations of the EDC, follows.

## SESSION ONE

CGS staff facilitated the first strategic planning session for the DeKalb EDC at the City of DeKalb Council Chambers on Friday, February 3, 2017. The first half of the session focused on data related to the economic development climate of the city ([Appendix A: City of DeKalb Economic Development Data](#)). This was followed by a discussion of the EDC members’ reactions to the data including: information that surprised them, additional resources or data needed to understand the climate better, and assets/challenges/opportunities arising from the data. Several thoughts were captured and are presented below:

- » Concern about the acknowledgment of the contributions to our economy by undocumented workers. Since this demographic is not part of the U.S. Census, how can we ensure that the social service needs, policy needs, employer issues, etc., of undocumented workers are determined and met?
- » Need to evaluate underperforming sectors in the city.
- » Need to evaluate workforce development and job creation. Where can employers find talent? Discussion of WorkNet and other resources available in city and county. Need to strengthen the connection among employers, educators, and workers.
- » DeKalb should be a “one stop shop for businesses,” and “do the work for them (businesses).” Need to overcome the idea that DeKalb is a city where it is hard to do business. The EDC agreed this perception has improved over the last year, but there is still room for improvement especially in the areas of subcontracting.
- » Access to transportation is an issue.
  - This includes within the city via bus routes, walkability, NIU connection to downtown and to stores (grocery, Wal-Mart, activities) and to outside locations via train access (Metra and Amtrak), bus routes, and others.

- » Need to increase enrollment at NIU. NIU is the largest employer and declines in enrollment affect all aspects of the local and regional economy. The students are a huge asset to the community and also a potential educated workforce. Students, as well as other residents, want to see quality of life activities (arts and culture activities, general retail and niche stores, variety of entertainment and restaurants, etc.).
- » Based on available data, the number of people who both live and work in DeKalb seems low. This could be an opportunity to capture those living elsewhere. DeKalb may need to evaluate housing options for those commuting from other areas to work.
  - Property taxes are an issue in attracting residents.
  - Residential growth is needed. Some of the largest employers such as Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee Hospital and NIU have employees that live outside of the city and often the county. This may be because the spouse has a job elsewhere and they are splitting the commute, but it is something to explore. NIU is researching this topic as well.

The second half of the session included an update on the progress of economic development projects/strategies in the 2025 Strategic Plan. Updates were also provided to the EDC via online documentation provided by the City through quarterly [progress](#)

[reports](#). The EDC requested additional resources and information in order to better prioritize strategies and projects, including:

- » STEAM Center report;
- » The Power Point from the session with economic development data and sources;
- » Merchant meeting notes or summary or this may be a potential need for the City to survey or meet with businesses to determine needs;
- » Egyptian Theater study;
- » Update on the Annie Glidden Corridor study;
- » ABC project updates;
- » Cornerstone project updates;
- » Examples of business incubators and co-working spaces;
- » Complete Streets Design report;
- » Downtown Redevelopment Plan;
- » Update from meetings with NIU students regarding development in DeKalb; and
- » A map of vacant city-owned properties.

In between the first and second sessions, CGS provided the EDC with session one notes and all available requested materials and asked them to review the additional resources and score the projects/strategies based on several criteria including economic impact, cost (relative), and City and community support ([Appendix B: Example Scoring Sheets](#)). The scores were shared prior to, and at, the second session and discussed as a group.

## SESSION TWO

CGS staff facilitated the second planning session for the EDC at the City of DeKalb Council Chambers on Friday, March 3, 2017. The first part of the session focused on the preliminary project prioritization completed individually by each commissioner between sessions one and two. This prioritization was designed to generate discussion among the commissioners during session two and lead to a group prioritization activity.

Commissioners shared their thoughts on which factors should be considered in scoring the projects and why they scored certain projects high or low. This exercise gave all commissioners an opportunity to contemplate the projects in a new light and either reaffirm or reconsider the ranking of the projects. Three topics were discussed in detail

and included: NIU enrollment, the relationship of the City and the University, and NIU's role as an economic driver; the recently released crime report for DeKalb; and any additional projects that have surfaced since the original 2025 Strategic Plan that should be discussed for possible inclusion in the prioritization. It was suggested that the

EDC listen to President Baker's presentation on enrollment and view Chief Lowery's presentation to the DeKalb City Council on crime statistics. The following are summary notes of the commissioners' comments and the outcome of their Prioritization process.

## UNIQUELY NIU

One of the discussions focused on how the City and NIU can work together to understand and promote what makes NIU unique as an economic driver. Comments made by the group included:

- » We are a university town, but we are not like any other university town. What makes us Uniquely NIU? There is some resistance to acknowledging that DeKalb is innately connected to NIU, but it is not a question of whether DeKalb is or is not a university community, but how to make the relationship better and economically beneficial to both the city and NIU.
- » DeKalb's identity is tied to NIU, so it is in the best interest of the city to embrace the relationship and make it strong. Are the right people at the table for discussions on collaboration?
- » We are a university town and this can be a positive by connecting to the arts, culture, innovation, and research occurring at NIU.

**It is not a question of whether the DeKalb is or is not a university community, but how to make the relationship better and economically beneficial to both the city and NIU.**

– EDC Member

- » There needs to be a connection, not just physically but collaboratively. While several initiatives have been undertaken in the last few years, there is a need for regular meetings between the City and NIU leaders about economic and community development. CGS shared that several best practices in community-university relations may address this issue.

**We are a university town and this can be a positive by connecting to arts, cultures, innovation, and research occurring at NIU.**

– EDC Member

- » DeKalb and NIU should be marketing each other more, having joint ventures in the arts and other areas that benefit students, businesses, residents, and visitors, and developing downtown opportunities through connections.

CGS agreed to share articles and ideas on university and community relations regarding economic and community development.

## ADDITIONAL PROJECTS/IDEAS

Some additional ideas were shared by members of the group. The improvement of the Annie Glidden North corridor was not on the original list provided to the EDC because it was not identified as an economic development project in the 2025 Strategic Plan. However, the group felt that it should be considered in the prioritization process. In addition, the subject of light industrial growth was discussed including:

- » Is there a need for small industrial incubation?
- » Companies such as 3M benefited from fast-tracking of industrial expansion. Could this happen more often?
- » The proposed NIU High Tech Park is a City collaboration with NIU and could connect students, programs, and businesses.

## PRIORITIZATION

Following the discussion of the preliminary prioritization ([Appendix C: Preliminary Prioritization Scoring](#)), commissioners decided which of the projects were closely related and could be combined. The combined list of projects is shown below (in no particular order) and includes some projects added to the original list by individual commissioners (*Green represents added projects since 2025 Strategic Plan*).

- » Marketing DeKalb assets such as city-owned property, the airport, and an expanded event calendar.
- » NIU/DeKalb technology initiative
- » Residential growth
- » Develop living wage jobs; develop pipeline of skilled employees
- » NIU/DeKalb collaboration; Streetscape/NIU Connector
- » New commercial development; identify retail, commercial and service needs; food, beverage and entertainment focused on students
- » Develop DeKalb food systems
- » Recruitment and retention strategies; support business owner initiatives
- » Arts, Culture and Entertainment (ACE) Corridor; Egyptian Theatre
- » Virtual incubator; co-working space; traditional small business incubator
- » Hotel/conference center
- » Revitalize S. 4th St. and E. Lincoln Corridors
- » STEAM Center
- » Developing, beautifying downtown and adding attractions; developing west of downtown to Annie Glidden
- » Long-term vision for Peace Road
- » Communicating through traditional and social media channels
- » Annie Glidden N. Corridor

After arriving at this new combined list, commissioners again prioritized the projects and clarified language. The combined reprioritized list is shown below in descending priority. It should be noted that the ability to implement all or a significant part of a project in a short time frame was considered in prioritizing projects. Therefore, projects towards the bottom of the list are not necessarily considered less important to the long-term economic growth of the city. The projects are grouped into three categories below: Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3.

**PROJECT/STRATEGY LIST BY TIER LEVEL**

<b>TIER 1</b>	Strengthen collaboration between NIU and DeKalb including implementing a Streetscape/NIU Connector
	Support the Arts, Culture and Entertainment (ACE) Corridor and continue to evaluate improvements to the Egyptian Theatre
	Develop, beautify, and add attractions to downtown and west of downtown to Annie Glidden
	Market DeKalb assets such as city-owned property and the airport and create and/or improve an expanded city-wide event calendar
<b>TIER 2</b>	Identify new commercial development opportunities and service needs such as food, beverage and entertainment focused on shared use by community and students
	Revitalize Annie Glidden N. Corridor
	Pursue an NIU/DeKalb technology initiative including a research park west of the NIU Convocation Center
	Foster an environment for entrepreneurial success such as a virtual incubator, co-working space, traditional small business incubator, and other support
	Continue investigating the feasibility of a STEAM Center
	Help develop a pipeline of skilled employees through strategic partnerships
	Attract living wage jobs
<b>TIER 3</b>	Improve communication to residents, businesses, and visitors through traditional and social media channels
	Develop DeKalb food systems in collaboration with local food providers and producers
	Enhance recruitment and retention strategies for businesses
	Encourage residential growth
	Encourage exploration of a hotel/conference center
	Revitalize S. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street and E. Lincoln Corridors
Develop a long-term vision for Peace Road	

After completing the reprioritization, the group began working on implementation strategies for the Tier One, top four projects:

1. Strengthen collaboration between NIU and DeKalb including implementing a Streetscape/NIU Connector
2. Support the Arts, Culture, and Entertainment (ACE) Corridor and continue to evaluate improvements to the Egyptian Theater
3. Develop, beautify, and add attractions in downtown and west of downtown to Annie Glidden
4. Market DeKalb assets such as city owned property and the airport and create and/or improve an expanded city-wide event calendar.

It was noted that several of the top scoring projects were related to NIU and its relationship to downtown. The groups brainstormed implementation strategies starting with strengthening collaboration between NIU and DeKalb.

## SESSION THREE

CGS staff facilitated the third, and final, planning session for the EDC at the City of DeKalb Council Chambers on Friday, April 7, 2017. Because previous sessions generated much interest in innovative approaches to collaboration between cities and universities, CGS researched and shared best practices regarding such collaboration.

### GENERAL FINDINGS

Increasing communication between DeKalb and NIU leaders was considered key to strengthening collaboration. This might entail regular formal meetings or less formal gatherings, information exchanges, and the use of a variety of media. There was a need for leaders from both institutions to learn what was important to the other and come to an understanding of the terms each used (which in some cases were very different). The relationship may be different in smaller towns than in large cities because of the relative reliance on the university, or conversely a small school may not have the influence of a large public university.

Many positive traits often found in college towns, such as low crime, strong public schools, and an entrepreneurial atmosphere, enable the town to attract jobs and residents and the university to attract students and staff. Cities should be aware of the changing demographics of the student body and the shift to nontraditional delivery of educational services which may result in fewer students living near the school. University facilities and talent can be used to offer services and opportunities to city residents. A summary of selected best practices follows.

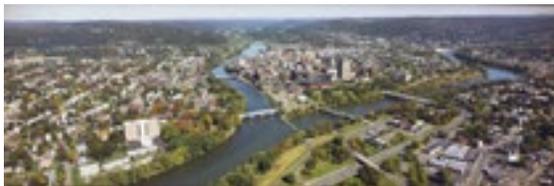
### SELECTED EXAMPLES OF CITY/UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

- » *Bethlehem, PA and Lehigh University*: Bethlehem, PA (population 75,000) and Lehigh University (enrollment 6,000) have achieved economic growth through a focus on education and health services, and population growth through immigration. The City and university have targeted downtown as an area for collaboration. Lehigh funds a downtown coordinator position. The University also funds the majority of the cost of the South Side Ambassadors Program, providing \$200,000 of the \$270,000 annual budget. This program puts a uniformed team of residents on targeted neighborhood streets between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. to welcome people and provide information, maintain the cleanliness of the area, and increase safety.



*Bethlehem, PA and Lehigh University*

- » *Binghamton, NY and Binghamton University:* Binghamton, NY (population 46,000) and Binghamton University (enrollment 16,000) are jointly tackling a difficult economic environment in upstate New York. The goal is to recover from the loss of manufacturing jobs by focusing on healthcare and education. University enrollment has been increasing while job growth has been negative. The City and university have established a joint economic development center as a one stop shop for entrepreneurs, bringing together all the resources of the university and city. The university is also building student housing downtown and is focusing recruitment at the graduate level which will generate more off campus housing needs. It should be noted that the campus and downtown are separated by a river.



*Binghamton, NY and Binghamton University*

- » *Denton, TX and University of North Texas:* Denton, TX (population 123,000) and the University of North Texas (enrollment 38,000), are both growing as a result of a strong state economy, domestic migration and international immigration. The University has established an off campus housing office to oversee off campus rentals for students.



*Denton, TX and University of North Texas*

- » *Kalamazoo, MI and Western Michigan University:* Kalamazoo, MI (population 74,000) and Western Michigan University (enrollment 25,000) have both benefited from the Kalamazoo Promise, a guaranteed tuition program for graduates of Kalamazoo high schools. The city's image has improved and the program has been an asset in attracting employers. In addition, the number of WMU graduates remaining in the city after graduating has increased. WMU's enrollment has grown as two-thirds of Kalamazoo high school graduates enroll in WMU directly or after attending the local community college.



*Kalamazoo, MI and Western Michigan University*

After the session was complete, the EDC asked CGS to compile priorities and strategies based on the EDC discussions, rankings, and review of additional research. This document could then be used by the City Council and Staff to develop action plans for the prioritized list of projects/strategies.

## PRIORITIZED PROJECTS/STRATEGIES

The list of projects/strategies below are tied to specific goals, strategies and actions in the DeKalb 2025 Strategic Plan. Many of the projects are relevant to implementing more than one of the plan's goals. Listed below are the goals which are most closely related to the projects/priorities in the plan.

- » Goal: Support place-making in DeKalb's neighborhoods, downtown, at entrance gateways, the airport, and on campus.
- » Goal: Bridge NIU and the city, whenever feasible, to create a mutually beneficial environment.
- » Goal: Position downtown DeKalb for long-term success.

- » Goal: Facilitate a business-friendly environment that supports existing merchants while attracting new investment to areas in need of commercial development.
- » Goal: Create an attractive climate for commercial and industrial investment.
- » Goal: Position DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport to serve as a regional hub for air travel and commerce.

- » Short-Term: Project could start this fiscal year;
- » Medium-Term: Project could start in 1-2 years;
- » Long-Term: Project could start in 3-4 years;
- » Ongoing: Project could start this year or later

It is anticipated that clear achievements would be evident within 12-24 months of start dates for all projects. Within each timeframe category, projects/strategies appear in priority order. This first might be particularly helpful if the City is most interested in addressing those projects with a relatively short timeframe.

Below are two tables that list the prioritized projects/strategies. While the two lists include the same projects/strategies, they are organized differently. The first list is organized around the following timeframes:

**PROJECT/STRATEGY LIST BY TIMEFRAME**

	<b>PROJECT/STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIORITY LEVEL</b>
<b>SHORT-TERM</b>	Strengthen collaboration between NIU and DeKalb including implementing a Streetscape/NIU Connector	Tier 1
	Support the Arts, Culture and Entertainment (ACE) Corridor and continue to evaluate improvements to the Egyptian Theatre	Tier 1
	Develop, beautify, and add attractions to downtown and west of downtown to Annie Glidden	Tier 1
	Identify new commercial development opportunities and service needs such as food, beverage and entertainment focused on shared use by community and students	Tier 2
	Foster an environment for entrepreneurial success such as a virtual incubator, co-working space, traditional small business incubator, and other support	Tier 2
	Improve communication to residents, businesses, and visitors through traditional and social media channels	Tier 2
	Develop DeKalb food systems in collaboration with local food providers and producers	Tier 3
	Enhance recruitment and retention strategies for businesses	Tier 3
<b>MEDIUM-TERM</b>	Revitalize Annie Glidden N. Corridor	Tier 2
	Pursue an NIU/DeKalb technology initiative including a research park west of the NIU Convocation Center	Tier 2
<b>LONG-TERM</b>	Continue to investigate the feasibility of a STEAM Center	Tier 2
	Encourage exploration of a hotel/conference center	Tier 3
	Revitalize S. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street and E. Lincoln Corridors	Tier 3
	Develop a long-term vision for Peace Road	Tier 3
<b>ONGOING</b>	Market DeKalb assets such as city-owned property, the airport, and an expanded event calendar	Tier 1
	Attract living wage jobs; develop pipeline of skilled employees	Tier 2
	Help develop a pipeline of skilled employees	Tier 2
	Encourage residential growth	Tier 3

The second list is organized in priority order with the Tier 1 priority projects/strategies appearing in the first group, followed by Tier 2 priority and then Tier 3 priority. Within each priority grouping, the projects are listed according to short, medium, long or ongoing timeframe. This list might be particularly helpful if the City is interested in addressing the projects in priority order rather than by timeframe.

Often individual projects/strategies are closely related to each other. In those cases, it may be advantageous to address related projects/strategies at the same time regardless of ranking. Examples might be to strengthen collaboration between NIU and DeKalb including implementing the Streetscape/NIU Connector and to develop, beautify, and add attractions to downtown and west of downtown to Annie Glidden.

**PROJECT/STRATEGY BY TIER LEVEL**

	<b>PROJECT/STRATEGY</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<b>TIER 1</b>	Strengthen collaboration between NIU and DeKalb including implementing a Streetscape/NIU Connector	Short-Term
	Support the Arts, Culture and Entertainment (ACE) Corridor and continue to evaluate improvements to the Egyptian Theatre	Short-Term
	Develop, beautify, and add attractions to downtown and west of downtown to Annie Glidden	Short-Term
	Market DeKalb assets such as city-owned property and the airport and create and/or improve an expanded city-wide event calendar	Ongoing
<b>TIER 2</b>	Identify new commercial development opportunities and service needs such as food, beverage and entertainment focused on shared use by community and students	Short-Term
	Revitalize Annie Glidden N. Corridor	Medium-Term
	Pursue an NIU/DeKalb technology initiative including a research park west of the NIU Convocation Center	Medium-Term
	Foster an environment for entrepreneurial success such as a virtual incubator, co-working space, traditional small business incubator, and other support	Short-Term
	Continue investigating the feasibility of a STEAM Center	Short-Term
	Help develop a pipeline of skilled employees through strategic partnerships	Ongoing
	Attract living wage jobs	Ongoing
	Improve communication to residents, businesses, and visitors through traditional and social media channels	Short-Term
<b>TIER 3</b>	Develop DeKalb food systems in collaboration with local food providers and producers	Short-Term
	Enhance recruitment and retention strategies for businesses	Short-Term
	Encourage residential growth	Ongoing
	Encourage exploration of a hotel/conference center	Long-Term
	Revitalize S. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street and E. Lincoln Corridors	Long-Term
	Develop a long-term vision for Peace Road	Long-Term

## Action Planning

Developing an action plan for the prioritized projects/strategies is the next step in implementing the 2025 Strategic Plan. The EDC began this process for the top Tier 1 projects/strategies ([Appendix D: Action Items for Top Tier Priorities](#)):

- » Strengthen collaboration between NIU and DeKalb including implementing a Streetscape/NIU Connector
- » Support the Arts, Culture, and Entertainment (ACE) Corridor and continue to evaluate improvements to the Egyptian Theater
- » Develop, beautify, and add attractions in downtown and west of downtown to Annie Glidden
- » Market DeKalb assets such as city owned property and the airport and create and/or improve an expanded city-wide event calendar.

The EDC recognizes that collaboration among the City, NIU, local businesses, and other stakeholders will be necessary to implement many of the items in the 2025 Strategic Plan. In addition, professional expertise and funding from a variety of sources may be needed, depending on the project. The City of DeKalb staff will establish an action plan that addresses responsibilities, funding sources, opportunities for collaboration, and other components necessary to begin implementing specific prioritized projects recommended by the EDC. After approval by the DeKalb EDC and City Council, this plan will be available to guide the City's economic development planning.

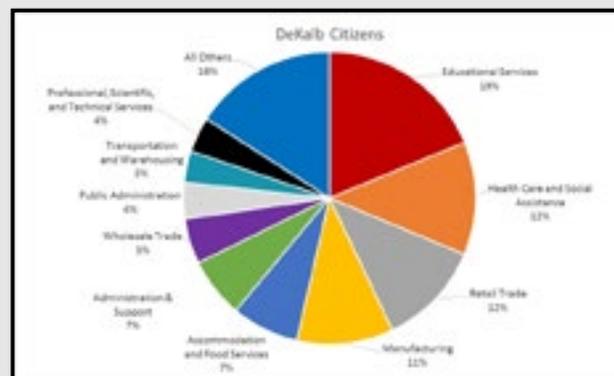
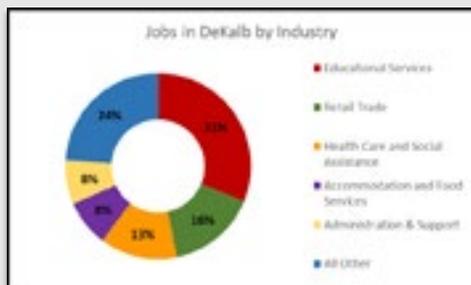
## Appendix A: City of DeKalb Economic Data (as reported during session one)

### City of DeKalb Economic Development Climate



- Population: 44,050
- Median Income: \$27,719
- Total EAV: \$526,062,131
- Median home value: \$165,500
- Median Rent: \$809

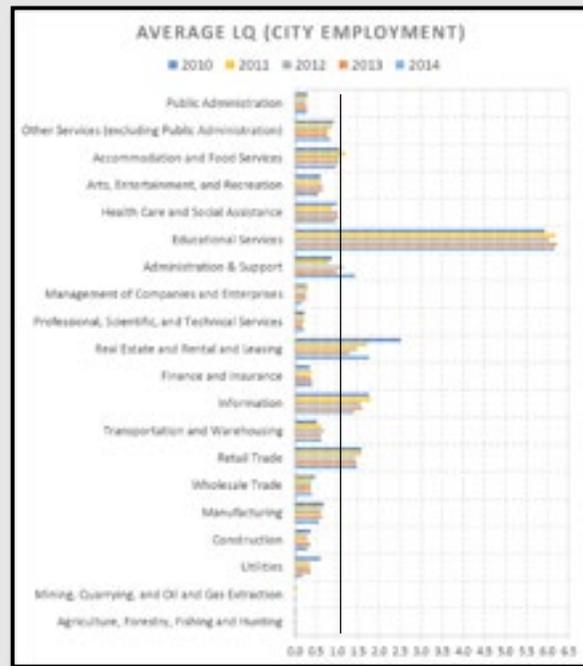
### Employment Statistics



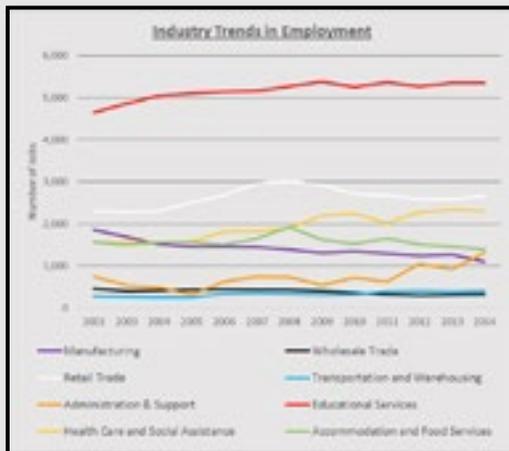
## Location Quotient

- LQ Score < 1 : Below average
- LQ Score = 1 : Average
- LQ Score > 1 : Above average

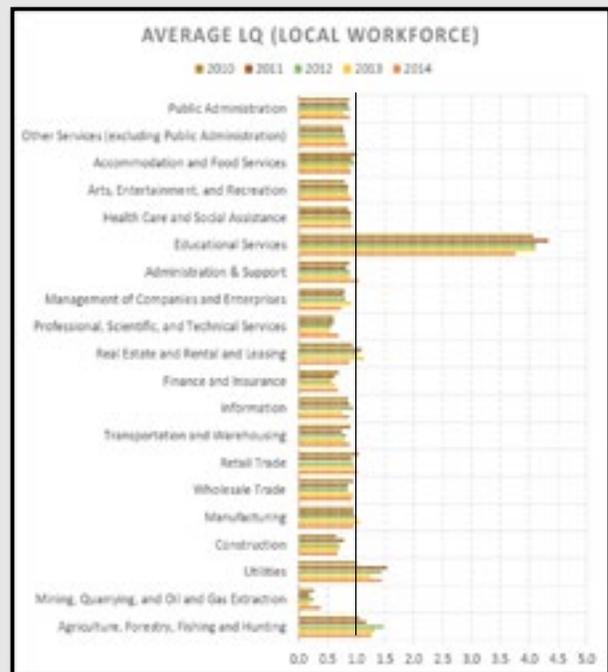
Source: Census on the Map Tool



## Location Quotient



Source: Census on the Map Tool



## Employment Statistics

Monthly Wages			
	Outflow	Inflow	Interior
\$1,250 or less	27.6%	33.4%	28.2%
\$1,251 to \$3,333	34.3%	33.6%	34.1%
\$3,333 or more	38.2%	33.0%	37.7%

State Monthly Wages	
\$1,250 or less	24.3%
\$1,251 to \$3,333	32.7%
\$3,333 or more	42.9%

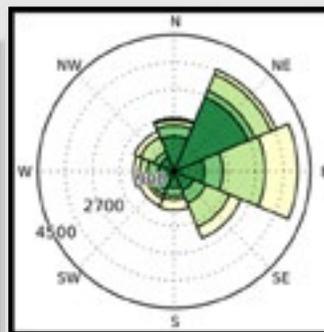
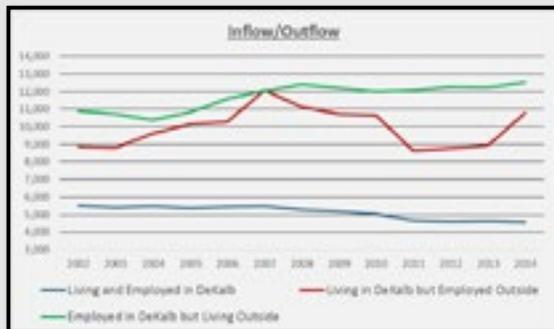


- \$1,250/mo. = \$15,000     \$3,333/mo. = \$39,996
- Income and wages are underperforming compared to State benchmark
  - Further analysis is needed to adjust for cost of living
- DeKalb imports low-wage employees (inflated due to student employment?)

Source: Census on the Map Tool

## Employment Statistics

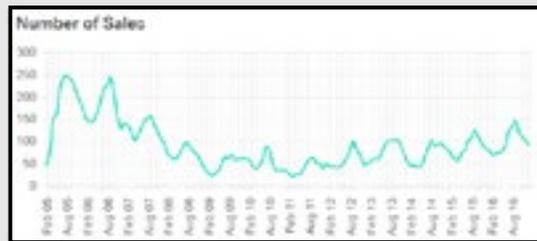
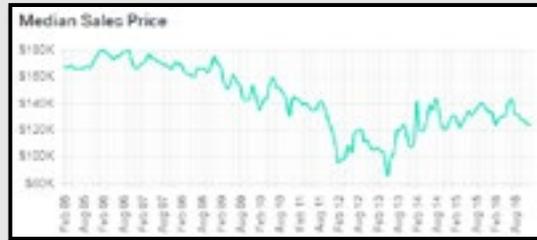
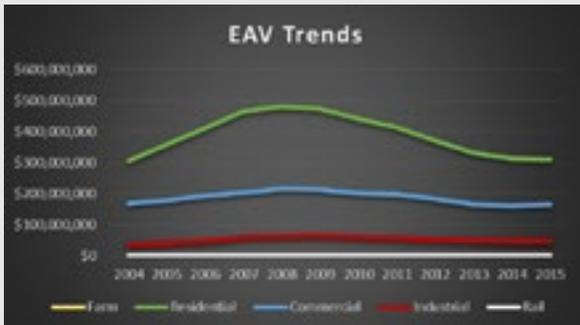
Where are DeKalb workers coming from?



Source	Count	Share
DeKalb, IL	4,575	26.7%
Sycamore, IL	1,695	9.9%
Chicago, IL	680	4.0%
Cortland, IL	413	2.4%
Aurora, IL	259	1.5%
Rochelle, IL	223	1.3%
Rockford, IL	218	1.3%
Genoa, IL	199	1.2%
Joliet, IL	157	0.9%
Naperville, IL	156	0.9%
Batavia, IL	109	0.6%
Bolingbrook, IL	101	0.6%
St. Charles, IL	101	0.6%

Source: Census on the Map Tool

## Equalized Assessed Value



Source: County Assessments, Trulia

## Equalized Assessed Value

- 2008: \$756,451,596
- 2014: \$523,032,841
- Loss of \$700,256,265 in real estate value in 6 years
  - Industrial: \$41,428,239
  - Comm.: \$162,305,511
  - Residential: \$500,291,244
- 2016 estimate: \$619,236,109
  - 17.71% increase over 2015



Source: County Assessments

## Economic Development Organizations

### Industrial



### Commercial



### Residential



### Tourism



### Events



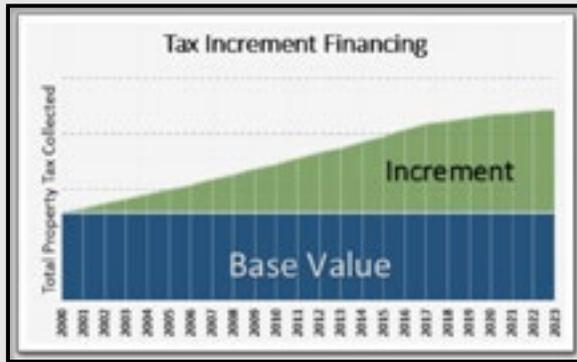
### Workforce Development



## Incentive Programs

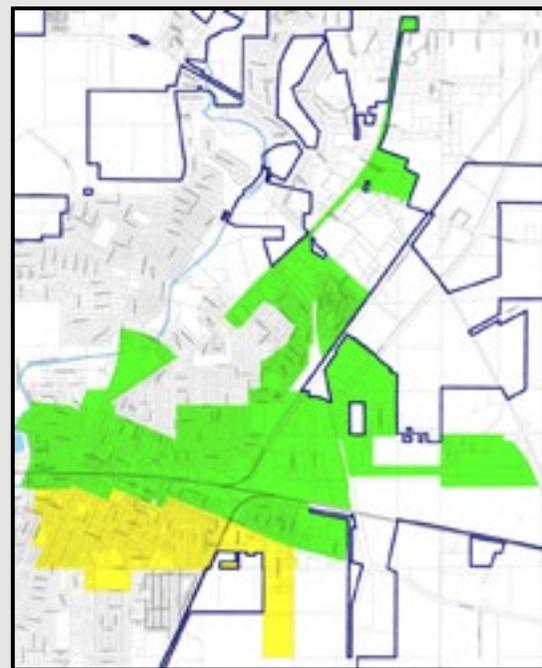
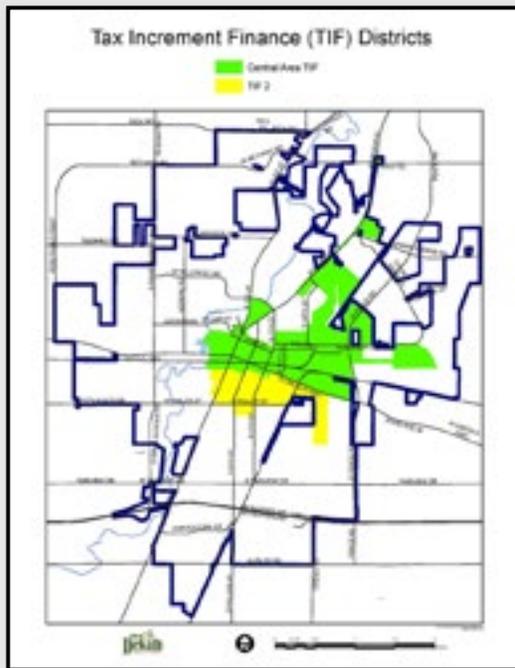
- Enterprise Zone
  - Administered by DCEDC
  - Pre-negotiated incentives
    - Property tax abatement for new industrial development
    - Sales tax abatement on construction materials
- Tax Increment Financing
  - Central Area TIF : Expires Dec. 31, 2021
    - 2008 IGA: Half of revenue declared surplus
  - TIF #2 : Expires Dec. 31, 2018
  - Architectural Improvement Program
    - Dairy Queen & Thai Pavilion
  - Individual Custom Development Agreements
    - Brian Bemis Toyota

## Tax Increment Financing



### Allowable Expenditures

- Cost of studies, surveys, development plans, and development services (legal, financial, admin)
- Marketing of redevelopment project area
- Land acquisition
- Rehabilitation, reconstruction, repair, remodeling of privately owned buildings
- Job training
- Financing costs related to issuance of bonds
- 30% of developer interest on loans
- Impact fees to other taxing bodies
- Relocation costs due to redevelopment
- Infrastructure



## Appendix B: Example Scoring Criteria

CRITERIA	SCORE VALUE
<p><b>Is the project/program doable?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» What will it cost?</li> <li>» Can it be funded?</li> <li>» How long will it take?</li> <li>» Is the talent available?</li> <li>» Do regulations allow it?</li> </ul>	<p>0 points: none are reasonably attainable</p> <p>3 points: one or two are reasonably attainable</p> <p>6 points: three or four are reasonably attainable</p> <p>9 points: all are reasonably attainable</p>
<p><b>What is the economic impact?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Is it measurable?</li> <li>» How will we measure it?</li> <li>» If not measurable, how will we know if we succeeded?</li> </ul>	<p>0: not measurable or impact assessable</p> <p>3: non-quantifiable impact can be determined</p> <p>6: somewhat quantifiable</p> <p>9: clearly quantifiable</p>
<p><b>Is there City and community support?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Are leaders willing to actively support the project/program?</li> <li>» Is there leadership to take ownership of it?</li> <li>» Is there significant opposition?</li> <li>» Is it inclusive?</li> </ul>	<p>0: weak support from City and community</p> <p>3: moderate to strong support from either City or community</p> <p>6: moderate support from both City and community</p> <p>9: strong support from both City and community</p>

## Appendix C: Prioritization Preliminary Scoring

<b>Project*</b>	<b>Score 1</b>	<b>Score 2</b>	<b>Score 3</b>	<b>Score 4</b>	<b>Score 5</b>	<b>Score 6</b>	<b>Total</b> (Out of 162)
Market City owned vacant properties	24	18	27	27	18	12	126
Market the airport	27	18	27	21	18	12	123
Develop pipeline of skilled employees	24	24	21	24	18	9	120
Identify retail, commercial & service needs	24	24	18	18	24	12	120
Residential growth	21	21	21	21	21	15	120
Develop living wage jobs	27	18	21	24	18	6	114
NIU/DeKalb collaboration	21	24	18	15	24	12	114
New commercial development	21	21	18	24	18	9	111
Support business owner initiatives	21	18	18	18	24	9	108
Recruitment and retention strategies	21	18	24	15	18	12	108
Arts, Culture and Entertainment Corridor (ACE)	24	27	12	12	21	9	105
Streetscape/NIU Connector	21	21	9	18	21	12	102
Virtual Incubator	27	9	18	12	15	24	102
Co-working Space	18	12	21	12	15	24	102
Revitalize S. 4th St. & E. Lincoln corridors	24	18	15	18	12	6	93
Egyptian Theatre	21	15	15	6	21	12	90
STEAM Learning Center	18	18	9	12	21	12	90
NIU/DeKalb technology initiative	24	21	12	12	12	6	97
Traditional Small Business Incubator	18	12	12	15	12	18	87
Hotel/Conference Center	15	15	12	9	9	9	69

\*These projects represent the initial project list and scoring completed by the individual EDC members after session one. After review and discussion at session two, several of the items were combined where a similar themes existed. In addition, some of the items were moved higher or lower on the priority list after further discussion, review, and rescoring as a whole.

**Appendix D: Priority 1: Improve both the physical connection and collaborative spirit between NIU and DeKalb.****ACTION ITEMS**

- » NIU Downtown Connector project-Embrace the “Complete Streets” philosophy in future transportation and planning initiatives, i.e. Long-Range Transportation Plan
- » Streetscape including lighting, signs, etc., from the eastern edge of downtown to Annie Glidden
- » Engage students to understand what they need/want in the downtown
- » “One-channel” for communication to students about events in DeKalb. May include social media and should be evaluated yearly for updating
- » Monthly meetings with leaders of the University and City to discuss and implement collaborative efforts. This could include having an economic development designee for both “teams”
- » Evaluate transportation options such as the Huskie pups, trolley transportation, bus routes including cost, accessibility, interest
- » Work with businesses from campus to the downtown to help create a place students “want to be”
- » Work with Proudly DeKalb to market the city and the university as a “UniverCity” (or other terminology) community
- » Improve the Annie Glidden North corridor
- » Develop an NIU/DeKalb technology initiative including the feasibility of a jointly developed research park.
- » Work to attract businesses that meet student needs and desires
- » Develop connections between NIU students and DeKalb businesses that encourage graduate retention to grow the local workforce, such as an internship fair focused on DeKalb County only businesses
- » Co-sponsor events with NIU to introduce and attract students to downtown DeKalb.
- » Develop off-campus housing options for young professionals and graduate students who want to stay in DeKalb.
- » Create places in the downtown and throughout the City where students are welcome to study.