

RESOLUTION 2014-063 Passed: June 23, 2014

AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF DEKALB, ILLINOIS TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT WITH NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES FOR A MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$22,426.00.

WHEREAS, the City of DeKalb, Illinois, is preparing to embark on a multi-year, collaborative, grass-roots strategic planning effort. The plan will articulate a 10-year vision for the City as well as a set of shorter-term specific actions to move toward that vision. Planning will be informed by an issues survey of all who live and work in the City of DeKalb that is being coordinated by the Advancing DeKalb County (ADC) collective impact initiative. These survey results, combined with extensive citizen input and the involvement of City staff in the planning process, will ensure that diverse interests and perspectives are represented in the final plan; and

WHEREAS, to assist in this endeavor, Northern Illinois University's (NIU's) Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) is proposing to manage the process of developing a new strategic plan, as outlined in the proposal and the agreement attached in the amount of \$22,426.00;

NOW THEREFORE, The City Council of the City of DeKalb and authorizes and directs the steps outlined therein to be undertaken and further authorizes the Mayor of the City of DeKalb, Illinois to enter into this agreement.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL of the City of DeKalb, Illinois, at a regular meeting thereof held on the 23rd of June, 2014 and approved by me as Mayor on the same day via roll call vote of 8-0. Aye: Jacobson, Finucane, Lash, Snow, Naylor, Baker, O'Leary, Rey.

ATTEST:


ELIZABETH E. PEERBOM, City Clerk


JOHN A. REY, Mayor



AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered this 24 day of June, 2014 by and between the BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, acting on behalf of Northern Illinois University through its Center for Governmental Studies referred to as "CGS", and the City of DeKalb, hereinafter referred to as the "City" witnesseth:

1. Scope of Work. In consideration of the mutual promises hereafter specified, CGS and the City agree to the services and conditions delineated in Attachment A, which document is incorporated by reference herein and made a part hereof.
2. Terms of Agreement. The term of this Agreement shall be from July 1, 2014 through January 31, 2015 (or the completion of the project, whichever occurs first), unless the term is extended by the mutual written agreement of the parties.
3. Compensation. As full and complete compensation for these services, the City shall pay CGS a fee in the amount of \$22,426 as a fixed-price contract, payable according to the following payment schedule:
 - \$11,213.00 upon contract execution
 - \$11,213.00 upon project completion
4. The parties hereto shall abide by the requirements of Executive Order 11246 and the Rules and Regulations of the Illinois Department of Human Rights, and there shall be no discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental handicap unrelated to ability or an unfavorable discharge from military service in the employment, training or promotion of personnel engaged in the performance of this agreement.

This Agreement constitutes the entire Agreement between parties hereto. There is no part of that Agreement not set forth herein; and no changes in or additions to said Agreement shall be valid unless in writing and signed by the parties hereto.

AS WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this Agreement to be executed as and of the day and year first written above.

CITY OF DEKALB

By John A. Sey 6-24-14
date
Title MAYOR



CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES
NIU OUTREACH

By Diana Robinson 7/14/14
date
Diana L. Robinson
Title: Interim Director

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF NORTHERN
ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

By Anne C. Kaplan 7/16/14
date
Anne C. Kaplan
Title: Vice President, Outreach, Engagement, and
Regional Development

NIU CENTER FOR
GOVERNMENTAL
STUDIES

PROPOSAL TO
THE CITY OF DEKALB,
ILLINOIS
FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

June 4, 2014



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Center for
Governmental Studies

Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development

PROPOSAL TO THE CITY OF DEKALB

The City of DeKalb, Illinois, is preparing to embark on a multi-year, collaborative, grass-roots strategic planning effort. The plan will articulate a 10-year vision for the city as well as a set of shorter-term specific actions to move toward that vision. Planning will be informed by an issues survey of all who live and work in the City of DeKalb that is being coordinated by the Advancing DeKalb County (ADC) collective impact initiative. These survey results, combined with extensive citizen input and the involvement of City staff in the planning process, will ensure that diverse interests and perspectives are represented in the final plan. To assist in this endeavor, Northern Illinois University's (NIU's) Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) is proposing to manage the process of developing a new strategic plan. This proposal outlines an approach that will produce the desired result.

CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES AT NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Since 1969, CGS has provided expertise to help decision-makers throughout Illinois implement efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches to social, economic, land use, and information management issues. This expertise is made available to governmental entities at all levels, private enterprises, public-private partnerships, and other institutions of higher education. As part of Northern Illinois University's Division of Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development, CGS fulfills its outreach and engagement mission through public service, applied research, technical assistance, and public policy development activities that are supported by interdisciplinary teams of researchers and practitioners with content expertise in these areas:

- Community, workforce, and economic development
- Human services
- Informatics
- Public management and training
- Survey research

In addition to this content expertise, CGS staff are skilled in process facilitation and strategic planning. These skills have assisted many public and nonprofit entities in charting a course for their future. Information about current and past CGS projects is detailed at www.cgs.niu.edu.

WORK PLAN

The strategic planning process proposed for the City of DeKalb will be informed by a related effort being supported at the county level. This county initiative, Advancing DeKalb County (ADC), is being mounted to align various resources of DeKalb County's public, private, and nonprofit service providers for greater impact on a set of issues identified as very important to those who live and work in DeKalb County.

The first step in the ADC initiative is to conduct a survey of all who live and work in DeKalb County. The ADC survey will ask residents and employees within the entire county to prioritize a number of quality of life issues. Although the survey is under development, the following issues are being considered for inclusion:

- abuse of children and/or adults
- access to public transportation
- affordable quality housing
- economic competitiveness
- education/achievement gap
- employment/living wage jobs
- environmental degradation
- homelessness
- hunger/food insecurity
- poverty reduction
- prejudice and intolerance
- public safety/crime
- substance abuse
- skills gap/workforce quality
- youth and adult obesity

City of DeKalb representatives are members of the ADC Leadership Council and will be involved in shaping this initiative. ADC leadership are aware of the City's strategic planning interests and have adjusted their timelines accordingly. CGS provides another point of linkage between these two efforts as we are advising and helping to support the ADC project.

Using ZIP codes, responses for the City of DeKalb alone will be tabulated and the results provided to the City. These survey results will provide a starting point for the City's strategic planning process.

Following are the seven major steps proposed to conduct this process.

1. **CGS/City planning team meets.** To ensure that the planning process reflects the experience and expertise of both NIU and the City, CGS requests that at least one City of DeKalb planner or other qualified staff person be assigned as a liaison to work on this project. We also will require access to an individual who can assist with estimating the costs associated with specific capital and service projects that may surface through the town hall meetings. An initial meeting will be convened to review the proposed planning process and timeline, make needed adjustments, and ensure that expectations are aligned. It is recommended that the City Manager attend this meeting and as many others as time and interest allow.
2. **Prepare analysis of the survey results for the City of DeKalb.** CGS will develop a written summary and analysis of the ADC survey results, which are expected in July. Included in the analysis will be relevant demographic, economic, health, public safety, and other data that may provide the context needed to better understand the survey results. This document will serve as an important input to the strategic planning process.

3. **Plan and convene seven town hall meetings.** CGS will work with City Council members and City staff to design and hold a town hall meeting in each of DeKalb's seven wards. They will be scheduled for a date and time to maximize participation. These meetings are intended to provide a forum in which to share the survey results and also to pose larger questions about the future of DeKalb. Potential questions include:
 - a. What does DeKalb want to be? What do we want to look like in 10 years?
 - b. What assets do we have? How do we link those to the needs identified in the survey?
 - c. What specific initiatives are most important to realizing this vision?
 - d. What should be the role of city government in bringing about this vision?
4. **Prepare written summaries and a synthesis of all town hall meetings.** CGS will compile the information generated at each of the town hall meetings and provide individual and summary reports. The final summary document will be used to frame the strategic planning retreat described in the next step. An important component of these reports will be cost estimates for the various projects and initiatives suggested at the town hall meetings. These will be developed in consultation with City staff.
5. **Plan and hold a strategic planning retreat.** The CGS/City planning team will design a one-day strategic planning retreat that will generate a 10-year vision for the City of DeKalb and identify a short-term (one to two years) set of actions to move the City toward that vision. These actions will specify what is to be achieved, by whom, when, and at what approximate cost. It is anticipated that retreat participants will include City Council members, City staff, NIU leadership, and potentially other key community partners.
6. **Draft and circulate the strategic plan for comment.** Drawing on the information generated through the ADC survey, the town hall meetings, and the strategic planning retreat, CGS will prepare a draft strategic plan for the City of DeKalb. This document will be circulated to the retreat participants for their review and feedback.
7. **Finalize the strategic plan and present it to City Council.** The final step in the process is to incorporate the feedback into the strategic plan document and provide a final electronic document to the City. CGS staff will be available to present the plan to City Council, if desired.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES AND TIMING

A summary of the key activities and timing proposed for this planning initiative is provided below.

Description of Activities	Timing
1. CGS/City planning team meets	July 2014
2. Update the planning team on ADC progress	July 2014
3. Prepare analysis of ADC survey results	August 2014
4. Plan seven town hall meetings	August 2014
5. Convene town hall meetings	September/October, 2014
6. Prepare a written synthesis of all town hall meetings	October 2014
7. Plan and hold a strategic planning retreat	November 2014
8. Draft and circulate the strategic plan for comment	December 2014
9. Strategic plan finalized and presented to City Council	January 2014

COST

The fee for conducting the work described above is \$22,426. The final deliverable will be an electronic version of the strategic plan and all related information in a format that has been agreed upon jointly.

CGS TEAM

The proposed CGS team will be led by Diana Robinson. Senior research associate Sandra Streed will assist in providing day-to-day project management. Research associate Jennifer Groce will advise on project design and strategy. Other CGS staff and NIU students will assist with the logistics of the town hall meeting and compilation of the results as needed. Biographical sketches of the three main project team members follow.

Diana Robinson is Director of CGS. In addition to managing the Center and its 30 professional staff, she is directly involved in a variety of applied research, program evaluation, and strategic planning projects. Prior to coming to CGS, Diana was Deputy Superintendent for Workforce and Community Partnerships at the Illinois State Board of Education. While there she directed vocational and adult education for the state and was responsible for programs in school-to-careers, alternative education, service learning, family literacy, and parental involvement.

Diana also served as Vice President for the Midwest Regional Office of the National Alliance of Business (NAB), a national business-led organization focused on workforce development and education reform issues. Before NAB, Diana managed National Academy Foundation model youth apprenticeship programs in the City Colleges of Chicago. She also worked in various research and management positions for the City of Chicago in employment and training and economic development. Diana holds a master's degree in social services administration from the University of Chicago and a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

Sandra Streed is a Senior Research Associate working on a number of development issues with a particular focus on local foods as a regional development tool. She has an extensive background in food and agriculture and deep experience in the attraction, establishment, development, and growth of strategic economic development alliance partnerships in both the private and public sectors. Sandra led the development and growth of the Illinois Center for Food Safety and Technology housed at the Illinois Institute of Technology, and served as its Executive Director. Previously, Sandra served as Executive Director of the Chicago Economic Development Commission, an entity created to provide business retention, expansion, and attraction services to the Chicago business community. Sandra earned an MBA from Saint Xavier University, an MA in French from the University of Illinois, and a BA from Bradley University. She also studied international business and French at Universite de Geneve, Thunderbird University, and McGill University.

Jennifer Groce is a research associate in community, workforce, and economic development with CGS. Since 2003, Jennifer has been actively involved in a variety of economic and community development activities focused on redevelopment, including oversight of a \$12 million downtown revitalization project in DeKalb, Illinois. Prior to 2003 she was involved in nonprofit health organization management, education, legislation and development at the national level. Areas of specialty include community and economic development planning, downtown revitalization, adaptive reuse, public construction planning and management, nonprofit organization management, and business development with special expertise in capital access. She has received various awards for her work in downtown revitalization and continues to participate on boards and in organizations at the local, state and international levels focused on community development and regional prosperity. Jennifer has a BS in Political Science from NIU.

CONTACT

For additional information about this proposal, please contact Diana Robinson at drobinson@niu.edu or (815)753-0912.

CITY COUNCIL RETREAT ON DEKALB'S 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

August 20, 2015



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Center for
Governmental Studies**

Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development

INTRODUCTION

The City of DeKalb is undertaking a 10-year strategic planning process to set direction for City policy, budgeting, and program development. To help inform this process, an extensive outreach effort was conducted to capture the opinions and ideas about the future of DeKalb from people who live, work, and/or learn in the city. In total, information was received by 321 people who attended a conversation cafe (including those who attended multiple conversations), 91 who completed a survey, and two additional sets of emailed comments. Northern Illinois University's (NIU's) Center for Governmental Studies (CGS), contracted to provide facilitation for this planning process, organized and summarized this information and provided it to City staff so they could provide additional input. The results are presented in this document and provide a discussion framework for the City Council's strategic planning retreat.

This report is organized as follows:

- Process of Community Engagement
- Strategic Planning Framework
 - Mission Statement
 - Core Values
 - Vision Statements
 - Strategic Goals
- Next Steps
- Appendix A: Themes suggested by participants in the community conversations
- Appendix B: Assets identified by community conversation participants

PROCESS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of the broad-based community engagement process undertaken for this planning effort was to provide DeKalb's City Council with:

- an understanding of what people who live, work, and/or learn here think about DeKalb's future;
- issues and opportunities associated with that future;
- assets on which to build; and
- opportunities for residents to become more engaged with their community.

Five questions were identified to obtain that information:

1. What do you think makes a city a great place in which to live?
2. Which of these qualities does DeKalb have?
3. Looking at these qualities, what can the City of DeKalb do over the next 10 years to improve your community - to make (or keep) it a great place to live?
4. How can *you* be more connected and engaged with your community?

5. What are you most proud of when thinking about DeKalb?

Dialogue Model

These questions were posed by NIU CGS facilitators and two community volunteers who hosted small roundtable discussions around the city following a “community café” model. Community cafés offer hosted dialogues of 60-90 minutes that take place in small groups of 3-8 people. A host sets up the conversation and, for purposes of DeKalb’s discussions, worked from a short script that ensured a similar format was used across the 48 tabletop discussions.

Each host captured pertinent points from his/her discussion on flipchart sheets to keep the conversation focused. These points, along with additional notes taken by NIU CGS personnel, were transcribed and incorporated into this document. Only first names were requested and the hosts emphasized that names would not be used in writing up the conversations.

DeKalb’s City Manager or Assistant City Manager welcomed participants to the nine larger community conversations and stayed for the length of the event. Their opening remarks included a brief overview of the responsibilities of DeKalb City government to help focus the conversation in those areas. Participants in all of the community conversations were assured that any ideas falling outside the purview of the City would be shared with the appropriate entity.

Marketing and Promotion

In an effort to engage people from throughout DeKalb, these community conversations were promoted in multiple ways:

- Flyers in English and Spanish were posted at 90 sites throughout the city, including public facilities (e.g., the library), grocery stores, laundromats, multi-unit residential buildings, rental offices, churches, community-based organizations, and other places with significant community traffic. Thirteen locations were identified for Spanish only posters.
- A press release was prepared and sent to local media. It was picked up by the local newspapers as well as NIU media.
- Radio advertisements were developed for three local stations after community feedback indicated that outreach would be more effective using that medium.
- The City created a web page on its website dedicated to strategic planning. All available information about the process was posted as well as links to an online survey in English and Spanish that contained the same five questions discussed in the community cafés.
- Community influencers were contacted by NIU staff regarding their willingness to “talk up” the event. The focus was primarily on communities with low income and minority residents.

CGS reached out to Latino, African-American, and Asian communities as well as high school and university students. The Mayor emailed approximately 60 leaders from the nonprofit, private, faith-based, and public sectors to participate.

Community Conversation Locations

Fourteen locations throughout DeKalb were used to host 15 community conversation sessions with one location used twice. These were selected in consultation with City staff and the Aldermen to ensure that each ward had at least one nearby location. Efforts were made to identify neutral settings in which people would feel comfortable sharing their candid perceptions and opinions. Each community conversation was held at a location that is ADA accessible, and transportation was available at no cost to participants. Locations included:

Asian American Center of NIU	First Congregational United Church of Christ
Barsema Alumni and Visitors Center	Hopkins Park Community Center
City Hall	Northern Illinois University – Holmes Student Center
Conexión Comunidad	Police Department
DeKalb High School	River Heights Golf Course
DeKalb Wesleyan Church	St. Paul’s Episcopal Church
New Hope Baptist Church	
Faranda’s Banquet Hall	

Participants

In total, 48 small group discussions were held between May 1 and July 31, 2015. People were allowed to participate in as many of these discussions as they wished, so the total of 321 participants includes an unknown number of duplicates. CGS staff who attended these discussions estimate that between 10 and 20 people attended more than one.

Of the 321 participants, 260 (81%) provided demographic information about themselves. Of these 260 people, 85% self-identified as residents of the City of DeKalb. Non-residents identified 12 other communities throughout the Chicago region as their home town. Participants who identified their home wards in DeKalb were distributed as follows:

Ward 1	7.0%
Ward 2	14.5%
Ward 3	12.0%
Ward 4	9.5%
Ward 5	25.0%
Ward 6	< 1%
Ward 7	2.0%
n/a	28%

Approximately 69% of the participants self-identified as Caucasian, 6% as African American/Black, 5% as Hispanic/Latino, 4% Asian, and 2% bi-racial. The remaining 14% did not provide race or ethnicity. With respect to age, of the 245 participants providing such information, 6% were 21 or younger, 25% were 22-43, 42% were 44-64, and the remaining 27% were 64 and older.

Promotional information included a website for people to access a short online survey in English and Spanish that asked the same five key questions as were posed in the conversation cafes. An additional 91 people completed an online survey. Finally, two sets of comments were provided directly to the City and were incorporated into the analysis.

In total, information was received by 321 people who attended a community conversation (including those who attended multiple conversations), 91 who completed a survey, and two additional sets of emailed comments.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The steps proposed to develop DeKalb's 10-year strategic plan included the following:

1. Conduct a series of community conversations to collect information pertinent to the strategic plan from community members.
2. Using the information from the community conversations, CGS prepares a high-level draft strategic planning framework consisting of a preliminary mission, core values, vision, and strategic goals.
3. CGS works with City staff to incorporate their ideas into the strategic planning framework for presentation to City Council.
4. City Council reviews, modifies, and approves the strategic planning framework at its planning retreat.
5. The approved strategic planning framework is shared with City departments so they can translate the strategic goals into operational plans.
6. The final strategic plan, including an operational component, is presented back to City Council for review, modification, and adoption.

This report represents the completion of steps 1 and 2 above. The information presented below provides DeKalb's City Council with a draft mission statement, core values, vision, and strategic goals.

MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is a short (typically one sentence) description of the reason an organization or program exists. It should be clear, concise, and memorable. Mission statements help guide decisions about priorities, responsibilities, and actions, and as such are at the core of a strategic plan.

DeKalb currently does not have a mission statement, so the first step in strategic planning is to develop one. Looking at examples of other cities' missions provides some guidance. Following are seven mission statements from other cities of various sizes:

- It is the mission of City government to provide effective and fiscally responsible municipal services in a manner which promotes a high standard of community life.
- The City partners with our community to deliver excellent service and plans for the future while preserving, protecting, and enhancing the quality of life.
- The City is committed to promoting the highest quality of life for all residents by providing fiscally sound, responsive municipal services and delivering those services equitably, professionally, and with the highest degree of integrity.
- To provide the highest quality of life through essential infrastructure, public safety, recreation, and welcoming growth within the constraints of fiscally responsible government.
- We provide high-quality, innovative and cost-effective municipal services that enhance the lives of our citizens and the vitality of our neighborhoods and business districts through teamwork, integrity, and continuous improvement.
- We provide municipal services and programs essential to a desirable community in which to live, work, and play.
- The City provides quality, affordable services that ensure the health, safety, and well-being of citizens, while collaborating throughout the community to ensure its economic, social and environmental vitality.

The two elements shared by all seven mission statements are that they describe the “what” and the “who” of city government: ***providing municipal services to promote quality of life for the community***. Additional elements may further refine the “who” (for example, people who live, work, and play in the community) or emphasize an important “how” (e.g., through partnerships, fiscal responsibility, or teamwork/integrity/continuous improvement).

Three additional concepts that the City Council may wish to consider for DeKalb’s mission statement are suggested by themes from the community conversations:

- The City serves people who live, work, and learn in DeKalb; and potentially those who visit the city given the interest in making DeKalb a regional destination.
- Incorporate the idea of inclusiveness.
- Integrate fiscal responsibility.

If these three concepts were incorporated into a basic mission statement for DeKalb City government, it could look something like this:

PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT FOR DISCUSSION BY CITY COUNCIL:

The mission of the City of DeKalb is to deliver high quality municipal services to those who live, work, learn in or visit our community through leadership, innovation, and fiscal responsibility to continuously improve the quality of life.

CORE VALUES

Core values are beliefs or convictions that guide and direct behavior and support purpose and vision. As a municipal organization, the City of DeKalb will utilize the core values to guide employees’ actions and shape the culture of city government.

Below are examples of core values that other public sector organizations have used. Best practice suggests that approximately five core values is optimum. Selecting a subset of these or other core values will support and enhance the mission and vision.

- Innovation
- Integrity
- Respect
- Trust
- Accountability
- Commitment
- Teamwork
- Professionalism
- Excellence
- Results
- Customer Service
- Initiative

VISION STATEMENTS

Vision statements complement the mission by describing the future state of the community if the mission were fully realized. Vision statements typically have these characteristics:

- Understood and shared by members of the community
- Include a diverse variety of local perspectives
- Inspiring and uplifting to the audiences
- Easy to communicate (length and language)

Many topics or themes were identified by participants in the community conversations. These have been consolidated into the 30 themes presented in Appendix A, and have been further grouped into five proposed vision statements addressing sense of place, community vitality and a vibrant downtown, inclusiveness, accessibility, and quality, responsive services. Each proposed vision statement is presented below with a short commentary that highlights themes and ideas raised in the community conversations or suggested by City staff. Each discussion summary is followed by a set of potential strategic goals for the City Council to consider.

A. *Vision of a Sense of Place: DeKalb is widely regarded as a welcoming, safe, and vital city offering economic, educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities for families and residents of all ages and incomes.*

Commentary: Participants identified many aspects of DeKalb as assets and features about which they were proud. These are summarized in Appendix B and include:

- Desirability as a community in which to live, work, and raise a family.
- Blend of a small town feel and a university presence; country living but near Chicago.
- Diverse, hard-working, friendly, and generous people.
- A shared community value of caring and extensive network of social services.
- Variety of cultural activities.
- Quality educational institutions.
- History and agricultural heritage.
- Varied faith community.
- Abundant green space, parks, and recreation.

Despite these many assets, participants also described the lack of a strong sense of identity as one of DeKalb’s biggest challenges. Several factors contribute to this. One is the sense that DeKalb and NIU are separate communities, despite DeKalb’s being described as a “university town.” As one participant inquired, “Is DeKalb a university town or a community with a university in it?”

Another contributing factor is that DeKalb suffers from a perception problem related to public safety, the quality of its schools, and negative incidents occurring in the past few years that have garnered media attention. It was thought that if the data were closely examined, these perceptions would be disproved. Improving the image of DeKalb to both internal and external audiences was viewed as essential to the city’s future.

Developing a city identity will help strengthen the sense of community in DeKalb. It will help bring together the city's diverse people, rich heritage, and distinctive neighborhoods, and help bridge the disconnect - physical, visual, and behavioral - between NIU and the balance of the city.

A strong city identity also will support effective placemaking (see www.placemaking.org). Placemaking leverages a community's assets and potential to create public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and wellbeing. DeKalb has many existing unique assets around which "place" may be created, including its neighborhoods, NIU, the downtown, the newly expanded library, and the gateways to the east and west of the City, to name but a few. A sense of place helps foster a sense of community.

Providing a broad spectrum of enjoyable activities and entertaining events is central to attracting and retaining residents and drawing visitors to the city. This is particularly true for DeKalb's youth, who represent the future of the city. Important needs described by participants included creating gathering places that bring people together within neighborhoods and across the city and establishing destination events that keep students in DeKalb for the weekends and provide them with diversions over the summer.

DeKalb has much on which to build these activities and events, including historic places, countless artistic and cultural resources offered by NIU, a newly expanded library, a system of 44 parks, and underutilized features such as the Kishwaukee River. The bikeability and walkability of the city were described as good, but improvements in their safety and connectedness could elevate them to important assets. A single online communication hub for all activities occurring in the city, NIU, and the county should be a priority.

DeKalb has numerous natural features in addition to the Kishwaukee River that need to be protected and enjoyed. The city has many green spaces that provide beauty and respite, good and plentiful water, some of the richest agricultural land in the world, and a burgeoning local food movement. DeKalb also has organizations dedicated to good environmental practices, such as the DeKalb County Community Gardens, NIU's STEM and environmental programs, and the Citizen's Environmental Commission.

Participants connected environmental sustainability to a number of other opportunities, such as employment for youth in the summer to maintain parkways and greenways, encouraging green entrepreneurship, and using local food to build community and create a sense of place. Many other opportunities exist for the City to support the natural environment, including working with the County to conserve agricultural land and top soil, exploring alternative energy options, using more environmentally friendly approaches to maintaining green spaces, and promoting what we are currently doing.

Potential Strategic Goals:

1. Develop a positive, asset-based identity and brand for DeKalb with key stakeholders.
2. Identify and address misperceptions about DeKalb.

3. Engage residents in local activities.
4. Support place-making in DeKalb's neighborhoods, in downtown, at gateways, and on campus.
5. Bridge NIU and the city visually and programmatically.
6. Conserve and protect DeKalb's natural resources.
7. Improve the safety and utilization of DeKalb's recreational assets.
8. Develop and promote cultural, historical, and recreational activities that appeal to a wide range of interests and age groups.
9. Create destination events and gathering places that draw people from throughout the region to DeKalb.

B. *Vision of 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.*

Commentary: Participants described community vitality as stemming from a strong business community, a thriving downtown, a rich array of cultural and recreational activities for people of all ages, and a flourishing natural environment.

A strong business sector provides needed goods and services to city residents, wages to its employees, and tax revenues to the City. The employment opportunities they offer are key to retaining college graduates and young families, as well as providing low income residents with pathways out of poverty. Participants described the need for an expanded employment base that includes more middle-skill and high tech opportunities and for connecting under-skilled workers with training programs.

Many suggestions focused on providing a friendlier and more attractive business climate, particularly for local businesses and start-ups. Attention to the mix of retailers in downtown DeKalb is needed as part of a downtown revitalization effort. Leveraging the innovation and entrepreneurship resources of NIU was identified by a number of participants as an opportunity that has yet to be realized.

People who wish to live in DeKalb and enjoy and contribute to its community vitality need appealing housing choices from which to choose. Attracting and retaining a mix of people and families require a range of housing options. Participants observed that there was considerable affordable housing in DeKalb, but much of it was not quality housing. A lack of housing for middle and upper-middle class individuals and families also was described.

Potential Strategic Goals:

1. Create a business-friendly environment that supports existing enterprises while attracting new investment and entrepreneurs.
2. Advance a City/private sector/NIU partnership to revitalize downtown DeKalb.
3. Leverage DeKalb's locational assets - highways, rail, NIU, broadband, and an airport – and available commercial and industrial space.

4. Ensure that DeKalb employers have access to a skilled workforce and residents have access to education and training programs.
5. Create an attractive investment climate by retenanting empty storefronts and demolishing dilapidated structures.
6. Develop a range of rental and owner-occupied housing options that allow people of all income levels to stay in DeKalb.

C. Vision of Inclusiveness: DeKalb promotes and fosters an inclusive environment in which diversity is valued, respected, and celebrated.

Commentary: Diversity was described in many ways: ethnic, racial, cultural, socioeconomic, religious, disability and sexual orientation. Prejudicial attitudes are a problem encountered by students and residents who have experienced discriminatory behavior first-hand. The social and economic isolation of residents in University Village and other low-income neighborhoods was identified as another form of discrimination.

This gap between rhetoric and behavior led some participants to differentiate between diversity and inclusion. One individual observed “There’s an appreciation for cultural diversity, but not a lot of embracing.” Others described prejudice by long-term residents and polar views among segments of the community, some of which was linked to income disparity. These opposing attitudes are a major challenge to forging a single, strong DeKalb identity.

Participants called for efforts to increase the participation of diverse groups in the community. Encouraging local business to welcome and cater to different groups, continuing and expanding DeKalb’s “Beloved Community” dinners, pairing different cultural events, and offering cultural competency training were among the suggestions for making DeKalb a more inclusive city.

Potential Strategic Goals:

1. Promote open and candid community conversations around diversity and inclusion.
2. Develop a diverse cadre of community-based leadership.
3. Support diversity in City policies and practices.
4. Encourage activities and events that showcase DeKalb’s diverse population and cultures.

D. Vision of Accessibility: DeKalb offers access to a network of services and amenities within and outside the city through an efficient network of transportation options that include roadways, public transit options, bike paths, and a regional airport.

Commentary: Three aspects of accessibility were described by participants: public transportation within DeKalb, the city’s bikeability and walkability, and travel from DeKalb to Chicago and neighboring communities. The transportation network includes DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport.

Public transportation emerged as an important issue that the City may be best positioned to address. While public transportation within DeKalb is offered through NIU’s Huskie Bus and TransVAC, it can take a long time to travel across the city and hours of service are limited. TransVAC was described as “stretched thin” and taxi service in DeKalb as “sparse”.

Transportation to Chicago, O’Hare Airport, and neighboring communities from DeKalb is challenging and is likely to require a regional solution. Without a car, getting to and from the Elburn Metra station can be difficult. There are no affordable and timely public transportation options for traveling between O’Hare Airport and DeKalb, an issue of particular concern for international students. Travel to neighboring communities within the region is also challenging.

Access to important services, such as grocery stores and health care, provided by the private sector also is key to quality of life. Identifying and assisting in the development of essential and diverse retail establishments and other services typically provided by the private sector are needed to help connect residents throughout DeKalb and the NIU community with necessary resources.

The bikeability of DeKalb was described by many as good but needing improvements. These included increasing safety for children, connecting the various segments of bike trail (although only if cost-effective), and creating dedicated bike lanes. Clogged drains were described as a hazard as they force bicyclists into traffic. The walkability of DeKalb also was described as good except in certain areas. Sycamore Road has inadequate sidewalks and no buffer from high speed traffic, and certain streets are perceived to be unsafe at night. Additional lighting was recommended.

Potential Strategic Goals:

1. Expand the availability of affordable and timely public transportation options within DeKalb.
2. Enhance the bikeability and walkability of DeKalb.
3. Explore options for facilitating transportation between DeKalb and major regional destinations, including Rockford, Chicago and Elburn.

E. *Vision of Quality, Responsive Services:* Through sound fiscal stewardship and collaboration with community stakeholders, City government provides and engages the resources needed to sustain a thriving DeKalb.

Commentary: A range of services is required to address the varied needs of residents, business people, students, and visitors. These include:

- basic health, life, and safety services provided directly by the City, such as public safety and public works, as well as essential services that the City helps plan and coordinate;
- quality professional services through a combination of appropriate staffing, equipment, technology, facilities, partnerships, outsourcing, and shared services;
- social services provided by the City and non-profit organizations; and
- services provided by the private sector, such as healthcare and grocery stores.

Improvement opportunities to strengthen services in each of these areas were identified by participants.

With respect to city services, while it was thought that DeKalb was overall a safe and well-maintained community, pockets of the city were perceived as unsafe. Similarly, DeKalb does well overall in cleanliness and beautification, but more is required to improve the “curb appeal” in certain neighborhoods. DeKalb’s infrastructure - roads, sewers, sidewalks, the electrical grid, and water mains - is in need of extensive repair.

Participants recognized that DeKalb’s needs exceed available funding and are concerned that the City’s needs are growing while the resources are shrinking. Declining student enrollments at NIU were linked to a likely decrease in sales tax revenue, and participants were worried that property taxes may increase further. In light of this challenging fiscal environment, supporting sustainable operations is paramount.

The challenging environment also emphasizes the need for a strong strategic planning framework. The need for City government to operate with the highest levels of transparency and accountability was described, as was the need for improved customer service in the public interactions of City employees.

Social services are key to the quality of life for many DeKalb residents. Although DeKalb has an extensive nonprofit network offering these services, funding is a perennial issue and tightened eligibility requirements for federal and state programs are becoming an added barrier. City government may be able to help connect residents with needed services through its planning and public information resources.

Potential Strategic Goals:

1. Develop a long-term capital plan to address the range of infrastructure needs in DeKalb.
2. Continue and expand the friendly presence of City police, fire, and other personnel in the neighborhoods.
3. Encourage homeowners, property owners, and tenants to help beautify and maintain all of DeKalb’s neighborhoods.
4. Pursue the highest possible standards of fiscal stewardship by providing transparent and accountable information.
5. Cultivate a customer service culture by City employees.

6. Encourage the meaningful involvement of residents in City government through volunteering.
7. Provide the community with clear and timely information about current issues, options, activities, and progress on implementing the strategic plan using a variety of media and approaches.

Woven together, the vision statements read as follows:

DeKalb is widely regarded as a welcoming, safe, and vital city offering economic, educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities for families and residents of all ages and incomes. DeKalb's neighborhoods, the downtown and NIU's campus are interconnected in a dynamic interplay of energy and creativity. DeKalb promotes and fosters an inclusive environment in which diversity is valued, respected, and celebrated. DeKalb offers access to a network of services and amenities within and outside the city through an efficient network of transportation options that include roadways, public transit options, bike paths, and a regional airport. Through sound fiscal stewardship and collaboration with community stakeholders, City government provides and engages the resources needed to sustain a thriving DeKalb.

NEXT STEPS

After City Council has reviewed, modified, and approved the draft strategic planning framework elements proposed in this document, the framework will be shared with City departments. Utilizing the feedback and specific action recommendations from the community conversations, their task is to translate the strategic goals into an operational plan that describes what actions they will take over the next 10 years to address these goals and how progress against these goals will be measured.

This framework also will be shared with the planning group working on DeKalb's application for an America's Best Cities (ABC) award to ensure that application is grounded in the same vision for DeKalb. The City and the ABC group will coordinate their planning efforts so that specific programs and projects are complementary and their timelines aligned.

CGS will incorporate these operational plans into this framework to complete the City's 10-year strategic plan. It will be presented to the City Council for review, modification, and adoption.

Appendix A

Themes Suggested by Participants in the Community Conversations

1. Safety and security
2. Good schools
3. Healthcare
4. Diversity/inclusion
5. Economic opportunities/business friendly
6. Government accessibility and transparency
7. Environmental protection
8. Affordability
9. Ease of getting around/public transportation/accessibility
10. Religious foundation
11. Culture and recreation/communication about events
12. Neighborliness/small town feeling/friendly people
13. Gathering places and events
14. Positive energy/pride
15. Clean/well-maintained/curb appeal
16. Shopping
17. Restaurants
18. Parks
19. Historic buildings/heritage/unique features
20. Public services/human services
21. Sense of community/community involvement/local social activism
22. Philanthropy/volunteering
23. Integration of town and university/presence of higher education
24. Vision/thoughtful planning
25. Viable financial base
26. Attractive to all ages
27. Vibrant downtown
28. Proximity to large city
29. Amenities
30. Airport

Appendix B

Assets Identified by Community Conversation Participants

1. It's a desirable community in which to live, work, and raise a family. The best of both worlds: small town feel but a university presence, country living but near Chicago
2. The people: diverse, hard-working, friendly, generous, educated; they will rally behind the right cause
3. Cultural activities: Egyptian, Stage Coach Players, Elwood House, new library
4. Proximity to Chicago, Rockford, Aurora
5. Airport
6. Quality education:
 - NIU (music and accounting programs, band, Davis Hall Observatory, MLK Commons)
 - New high school (music and athletic programs)
 - Kishwaukee College's growth and expansion
7. History: farming heritage, barbed wire, the underground railroad, architecture, historic neighborhoods
8. A caring community:
 - a. Programs that engage residents like Beloved Community, Camp Power, the Penguin Project, Community Gardens, Hope Haven
 - b. Strong human service network
 - c. Local philanthropy – the DeKalb County Community Foundation
 - d. Volunteer opportunities (e.g. VAC)
9. Faith community and network
10. Environment: Green space and recreation (44 parks for 44,000 people), the bike trail system, the Citizen's Environmental Commission, water quality and availability, recycling program
11. Agriculture: DeKalb Hybrid Seed Corn, the rich soil, Farmer's Market
12. Fiber optics opportunities
13. Cindy Crawford's hometown
14. The east lagoon
15. Services: healthcare, City services (Police, Fire, Public Works, new emergency alert system)

DATE: October 7, 2015

TO: Honorable Mayor John Rey
City Council

FROM: Anne Marie Gaura, City Manager
Patty Hoppenstedt, Assistant City Manager
Lauren Stott, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Update from the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University on DeKalb's Strategic Plan Process.

I. Summary

The Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) at Northern Illinois University has recommended a change in the timeline for the City of DeKalb Strategic Plan. Under the new timeline, the draft Plan will be presented to the City Council in November. This recommended change will require no financial consideration. The timeline adjustment will allow additional time for CGS to work with City staff to effectively align strategies and action steps to the visions and goals.

II. Background

The City of DeKalb initiated its Strategic Planning process in 2014 with the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University. The end result will be a Strategic Plan document that outlines a comprehensive vision for the City over the next decade. Using the draft plan framework shaped by the various Community Conversations and the August 20th City Council planning retreat, CGS is now working with City staff in reviewing the proposed visions and goals to determine what future activities should be planned.

The Executive Team is closely reviewing the plan to ensure that City activities moving forward align with the new framework. Additional time, recommended by the Center for Governmental Studies, will ensure all needs revealed throughout the planning process are addressed. Diana Robinson, Director of CGS will be at the October 12th Committee of the Whole Meeting to provide an update and answer any questions of the City Council.

III. Community Groups/Interested Parties Contacted

Community input was gathered from Community Conversations and other targeted meetings throughout the spring and summer of 2015. This input has helped guide the City's draft vision,



goals and strategies. It has also led to the determination that City staff requires more time to address community needs and help identify specific actions to accomplish these goals.

Additionally, the America's Best Communities Grant Committee is utilizing information from the City's Strategic Plan process to guide its application. The City is working with the Committee to ensure appropriate and necessary updates are provided and the grant application process is not jeopardized by the timeline extension.

IV. Legal Impact

There is no anticipated legal impact.

V. Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to consider.

VI. Options

The City Council may choose to approve, deny or provide further clarification to the request.

VII. Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council approve the recommendation of a timeline extension for the Strategic Plan process.



DATE: October 7, 2015

TO: Honorable Mayor John Rey
City Council

FROM: Anne Marie Gaura, City Manager
Cathy Haley, Finance Director

SUBJECT: FY2016 Budget Update.

I. Summary

A FY2016 Budget update is being provided to summarize the status three months into the fiscal year and highlight the impact of the State's lack of adopting its own budget.

II. Background

FY2016 City Budget Update

After completing the first quarter of the fiscal year, a FY2016 Budget update is being provided. After three months, expenditures should be trending at around 25%. General Fund expenditures are trending slightly behind at 22.62% and revenues appear to be trending slightly ahead at 26.10%.

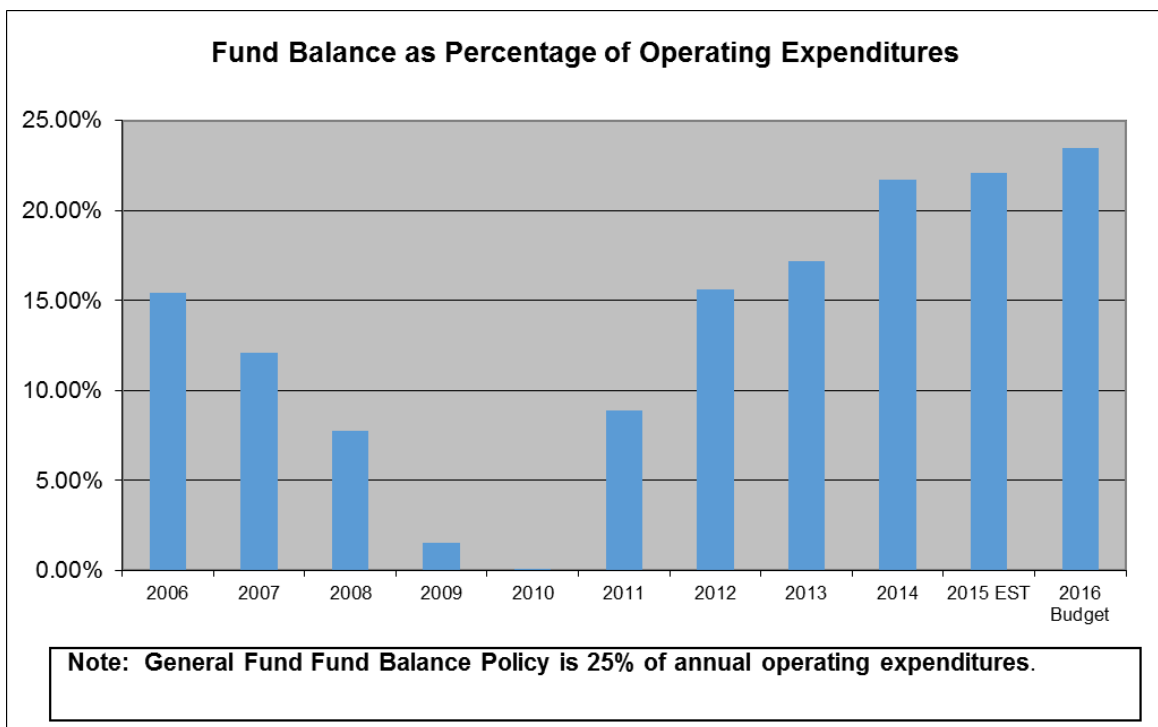
PRELIMINARY THROUGH PERIOD 3, FISCAL YEAR-END 2016				
GENERAL FUND	BUDGET	YTD ACTUAL	AVAILABLE	PCT USED
EXPENSES				
Legislative	317,232	70,591	246,641	22.25%
Administration	1,023,153	232,871	790,282	22.76%
Human Resources	329,227	46,761	282,466	14.20%
Finance	1,455,212	325,909	1,129,303	22.40%
Police	12,136,480	2,817,691	9,318,789	23.22%
Fire	9,735,518	2,448,840	7,286,678	25.15%
Public Works	3,609,193	674,419	2,934,774	18.69%
Community Development	1,412,338	172,584	1,239,754	12.22%
General Support	4,397,584	996,631	3,400,953	22.66%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	34,415,937	7,786,297	26,629,640	22.62%



The City is also showing actual income tax revenue for the first three months of FY2016 trending ahead of budgeted revenue by more than 11%. Projecting this out through the remainder of FY2016 would show actual income tax revenue coming in over budget by more than \$480,000. In addition to the budgeted surplus of \$502,743 for FY2016, the City could end FY2016 close to \$1,000,000 with revenues exceeding expenditures.

As seen on the chart below, the City of DeKalb has been working diligently on getting the General Fund Balance reserve levels back up to be in compliance with the City’s fund balance policy of 25%. Reserves dropped to a low of 1% (\$22,169) back in FY2010. Since then, the focus of establishing the 25% fund balance has been both a goal and a priority.

With the FY2015 audit in full swing, initial projections are showing the City fund balance rebounding quicker than initially projected during the FY2016 budget process. Current rough projections are showing the City at 22% at the end of FY2015 or over \$7,000,000, and over 23% by the end of FY2016 based on budgeted numbers. This could bring fund balance reserves somewhere between \$7,000,000 and \$8,000,000, which is the strongest it has been in over 10 years.



FY2016 State of Illinois Budget Update

The City has been closely monitoring pending legislation at the State level to stay abreast of any issues that may have an impact on the City. The City is now three months into FY2016 and the State still has not passed its FY2016 Budget nor has there been any indication that it is close to



being adopted. As you may recall, the Governor's budget proposal originally called for a 50% reduction to the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) or more commonly known as the municipal portion of the State Income Tax.

Currently, the original 50% reduction to LGDF has been taken off the table. The most recent bill that appears to be a possible "recommendation" is a 10% reduction in LGDF. A 10% reduction in LGDF for the City of DeKalb would equal about \$450,000 which is less than the budgeted surplus of \$502,743 for FY2016. At this time, there is no reliable information to indicate if there could be a LGDF reduction, how much the reduction would be, when the reduction would take place or for what period of time. In the event a 10% reduction took place, the City could absorb it in the General Fund budgeted surplus.

While the City's fund balance is on the re-bounce and this is excellent news, staff will continue to monitor the State budget process. The increase in the City's fund balance over the last five years has helped put the City in a position to withstand a temporary reduction in the LGDF. Anything long-term at this point is pure speculation and continues to make it difficult to plan for the future needs of the City.

III. Community Groups/Interested Parties Contacted

Community input was initially gathered through the extensive FY2016 Budget process, which included multiple Joint City Council and Finance Advisory Committee Meetings as well as a Public Hearing at the June 8, 2015 City Council Meeting.

IV. Legal Impact

There is no anticipated legal impact.

V. Financial Impact

Moving forward with the all of items for the FY2016 budget year will have minimal financial impact based on a strong fund balance at the end of FY2015, a budgeted surplus of \$502,743 in FY2016 and income tax revenue increasing and coming in stronger than originally projected during the budget process by more than \$480,000.

VI. Options

The City Council may choose to approve, deny or provide further clarification to the request.

VII. Recommendation

Based on all of this information, staff would move forward with all budgeted items in the General Fund, including new purchases, plans and personnel. Note, all items to be purchased or contracts to be awarded over \$20,000 would still be brought to the City Council for approval



during a regular Council meeting throughout this fiscal year. The total amount of all these new items equals \$374,551, which is about 1% of the total General Fund expenditures.

Moving forward with the all of items for the FY2016 budget year will have minimal financial impact based on a strong fund balance at the end of FY2015, a budgeted surplus of \$502,743 in FY2016 and income tax revenue increasing and coming in stronger than originally projected during the budget process by more than \$480,000.



DATE: December 9, 2015

TO: Honorable Mayor John Rey
City Council

FROM: Anne Marie Gaura, City Manager
Patty Hoppenstedt, Assistant City Manager
Lauren Stott, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Draft 2025 Strategic Plan Update – Incorporation of Public Comments

I. Summary

Diana Robinson from the Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) at Northern Illinois University will present a brief update on the incorporation of public comments to the DeKalb 10-Year Strategic Plan. The Draft Strategic Plan was presented to Council for the first time on November 23 and the community was invited to provide public comments through December 7. City staff and CGS are working now to plan a City Council retreat for discussion of the draft.

II. Background

The City of DeKalb has embarked on a multi-year, collaborative, grassroots Strategic Planning effort. This process stemmed from Council's indication of its aspiration for a long-term planning process for the City. Strategic planning, which is a systematic process by which a community plans for its future, produces a plan to guide specific and measurable actions to assist the City in achieving its goals.

Following a Strategic Planning Retreat in March 2014, the City of DeKalb initiated its Strategic Planning process with the Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) at Northern Illinois University. In June 2014, City Council approved an agreement with CGS for development of a Strategic Plan document. Throughout 2014 and 2015, CGS has gathered data and information from the community to shape a framework for Plan development. CGS conducted a community survey that resulted in the revision of the scope of the project to expand and include input from underrepresented populations.

After a revision of the scope of the document and subsequent timeline changes were approved by the City Council, CGS initiated an intensified outreach process that included targeted meetings and focus group-style conversations. The outreach process was conducted from May to July of 2015 and resulted in a Strategic Plan Framework document. The document incorporated feedback from 15 Community Conversations including 48 small group discussions to guide the next step of



the planning process. In August 2015, City Council and City Staff convened for another Strategic Planning retreat to review the draft framework.

Using the framework shaped by the various Community Conversations and the City Council Planning Retreat, CGS and City staff compiled a Draft Strategic Plan to guide the City's activities. The Executive Team has closely reviewed the plan to ensure that City activities moving forward align with the new framework.

The Draft Strategic Plan document was made available to the public on November 19 and community members were invited to provide comments and suggestions for the document until December 7. CGS gathered the comments and is working with staff to incorporate the updates appropriately. Staff is also working with CGS to finalize plans for a City Council retreat to discuss the Draft Strategic Plan and the incorporated comments in depth. The retreat will provide the Council with a setting to ask questions, contemplate changes and engage in discussions to ensure all aspects of the plan are deliberately considered.

III. Community Groups/Interested Parties Contacted

Community members were invited to send comments and suggestions on the plan directly to CGS between November 19 and December 7.

In addition to targeted comments on the Draft Plan, community input was gathered from Community Conversations and other targeted meetings throughout 2015. This input shaped the development of the draft. NIU's Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) facilitated the meetings, which were structured to give all participants ample opportunity to provide input and discuss their ideas.

IV. Legal Impact

The draft Strategic Plan, if adopted, will serve as an advisory document with no direct legal impact.

V. Financial Impact

This document, if approved, will directly affect allocation of resources. The plan will be linked to the budget process each year, with strategies and some actions contemplated as budget items.

VI. Options

The Council may provide additional direction at this time, including direction on plans for a retreat being scheduled for January. The Draft Strategic Plan, along with incorporated comments and suggestions, will be reviewed at this time.

VII. Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council convene in January to review the Draft Strategic Plan, including the incorporated public comments.

