

RESOLUTION 2014-104 PASSED: NOVEMBER 10, 2014

ADOPTING A SUSTAINABILITY PLAN FOR THE CITY OF DEKALB, ILLINOIS.

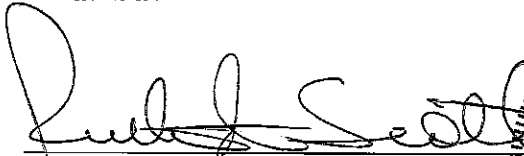
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL of the City of DeKalb, Illinois, as follows:

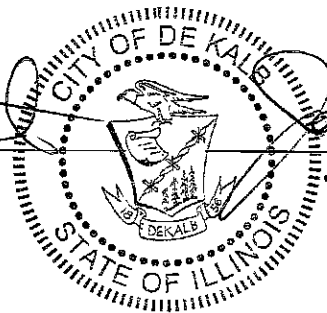
Section 1. That the City of DeKalb officially adopts the Sustainability Plan as identified in "Exhibit A."

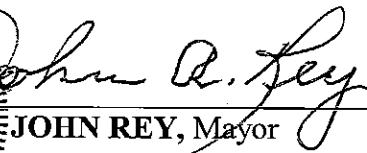
Section 2. That the Citizen Environmental Commission shall be designated as the Commission in charge of prioritizing, reviewing and making recommendations for implementing the various goals contained within the plan to the City Council.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL of the City of DeKalb, Illinois at a regular meeting thereof held on the 10th day of November, 2014 and approved by me as Mayor on the same day. Passed by Omnibus roll call vote of 7-0-1 on the Consent Agenda. Aye: Jacobson, Finucane, Snow, Naylor, Baker, O'Leary, Rey. Absent: Lash.

ATTEST:


RUTH SCOTT, Deputy City Clerk




JOHN REY, Mayor

City of DeKalb Sustainability Plan

Prepared by: Citizen Environmental Commission and Sustainability Plan Citizen Task Force
Date: October 6, 2014

Introduction

According to the United Nations Bruntland Commission of 1983, sustainability is “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” In short, sustainability is both a philosophy and a practice that seeks to manage finite resources in a way that is both beneficial to current and future generations. It protects, preserves, and restores the natural, social and economic environment so as to enhance life for all.

The City of DeKalb Sustainability Plan is designed to put sustainability into practice on a local level and has evolved into a strategic planning document for the Citizen Environmental Commission (CEC). It is a citizen-initiated, forward-looking document with broad-based input from all areas of the community. The plan is meant to be a living, dynamic guide to aid policy makers, organizations, businesses, and residents in making the City a more vibrant, resilient, and sustainable community that provides a high quality of life for current and future residents. Because of its dynamic nature, the plan will be adjusted and reviewed regularly by the CEC to assure it is always up to date.

Our Mission

It is the intention of the CEC to provide a guide of sustainable goals, actions, and practices that will preserve, restore, and develop all of DeKalb's vital community resources, thereby enhancing the quality of life for present and future generations.

Background/Process

The process of creating a sustainability plan for DeKalb began with a public forum in October of 2011. Over forty citizens attended a presentation by the Elgin Sustainability Coordinator, who shared the process the City of Elgin followed in the creation of its Sustainability Plan. After the public forum a proposal for the creation of a City of DeKalb Sustainability Plan was brought forward by a commissioner of the DeKalb CEC. The Commission voted to create a plan and assigned a citizen task force to create a draft and bring it back to the full commission for editing and approval. The Sustainability Plan Task Force was created and held its first meeting in April of 2012.

One of the first actions of the Task Force was to interview members of city staff in all departments, members of the business community, local citizens, Northern Illinois University students and staff, leaders of the DeKalb Park and school districts, and other groups. An article was published in the local

newspaper announcing the creation of the Task Force and inviting interested citizens to participate in the creation of the plan. Three members of the CEC and twenty citizens started work on the plan.

The Task Force divided into working groups with each group focusing on a specific area of the City's environment. The convener of the task force reported monthly to the full Commission. Also links to the draft in its formation were sent to the entire Commission soliciting input from the beginning of the process.

The first completed draft was presented to the CEC for input at the March 2014 meeting. Feedback given at the meeting was taken back to the Task Force and adjustments were made to the document. The draft was then sent to the Commission for further comment. A revised draft was then submitted to the full Commission for approval. This draft was then further edited and submitted to City staff for additional comments and recommendations.

The full plan was then placed on the City of DeKalb website, public library, and social media for public review. Final adjustments were made to the document at the September 2015 meeting. The final draft was voted on in October by the CEC and presented to the City Council for final review and approval on November 10, 2014.

Areas Covered In the Sustainability Plan

- City Operations
- Air Quality
- Green Economy Development
- Alternative Energy
- Food Security and Healthy Living
- Natural Environment
- Housing and Urban Design
- Solid Waste
- Transportation
- Water Resources

Each area lists goals prioritized according to recommended *short* (0-3 years), *medium* (3-6 years), and *long-term* (more than 6 years) completion times. It is expected that the goals of the document will be revisited on a regular basis, updated in accordance with priorities completed and adjusted to accommodate new goals that may arise.

Several of the goals referred to in this plan are general on purpose. This is to provide flexibility when referring to some level of promotion of an environmental issue. The word *promote* is used intentionally in this plan to provide flexibility for decision-makers. The various levels of promotion include education, incentives (e.g. financial), and regulation. Deciding on the level of promotion at the time of writing this document was intentionally vague since goals and decision-makers change over time. The CEC chose to leave it open until specific policy is set in the future.

Recommendations

City Operations

Goal 1: Improve communication of environmental policies to City staff, local residents, and business owners.

Short Term

1. Implement a practical mechanism for communicating environmental policies and expectations to City employees.

Long Term

2. Identify cost savings that could be realized through the hiring and/or appointment of a City employee to manage environmental policies. These savings would be cost shifted to this new employee line.

Goal 2: Increase usage of sustainable practices in City-owned and operated facilities.

Short Term

1. Reduce the use of paper at all levels of operations. Use best practices for “green” printing and print in minimal font type, such as Garamond.
2. Store documents electronically instead of in paper form wherever feasible.

Medium Term

3. Take steps to join a green purchasing network.

Definition: A green purchasing network is a network of buyers dedicated to socially responsible and environmentally sustainable purchasing.

4. Use no or low VOC paints and adhesives.

Definition: Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are gases emitted from certain solids or liquids. VOCs include a variety of chemicals some of which may have short- and long-term adverse health effects.

5. Require the use of “green” cleaning products and reusable cloths for cleaning, including in Requests For Proposals.

Goal 3: Improve fuel efficiency in all City-owned and operated vehicles.

Short Term

1. Establish a “no-idling” policy for City-owned non-public safety vehicles.

Definition: Idling is running an engine that is powering a vehicle when it is not moving. Idle reduction is a rapidly growing trend in the U.S. federal, state, and local fleet policies. Each year idling uses up several billion gallons of fuel and contributes significantly to the transportation sector’s portion of yearly greenhouse gas emissions.

Long Term

2. Where viable, replace City vehicles and machines with sustainable, fuel-efficient alternatives as they are retired. The savings should be realized in long-term fuel and energy reductions (the budget should reflect return on investment (ROI) for purchases made that cost more than the standard purchase).

Goal 4: Identify improvements needed and steps required to increase energy efficiency in City-owned buildings and other facilities.

Short Term

1. Conduct an energy audit to establish a baseline of energy use by City departments. The audit should include measuring the current energy use from alternative sources, publishing the data before and after each energy audit for City government buildings, and updating energy conservation measures taken in annual state of the City reports.

Point of Pride: The police station is already in compliance.

2. Adopt high efficiency lighting standards for all new city-owned construction and renovations to the extent feasible.

Medium Term

3. Analyze new major capital improvement projects to ensure that the most cost effective and environmentally sound energy conservation measures possible are included. An example of a national standard from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education can be found here: <http://www.aashe.org/wiki/climate-planning-guide/conservation-and-efficiency.php>.
4. Take steps to conserve energy and water use in City-owned facilities by emphasizing the use of water-conserving plumbing fixtures, electronic thermostats, and motion-sensor lighting in all City buildings.

Long Term

5. Invest in alternative and renewable energies and create policies to curb energy consumption in all areas of City operations.

Air Quality

Goal 5: Enhance Air Quality within the City of DeKalb.

Short Term

1. The CEC will encourage residential use of high (premium) efficiency stoves, furnaces, and fireplaces through the use of promotional materials and other means. These materials will be available in the Community Development Department, the Crime Free Housing Division or Police Department, on the City website, and possibly in stores that sell these appliances.
2. Evaluate the feasibility of an ordinance that bans smoking in outdoor public locations, such as restaurant patios.
3. Consider the passage of a city-wide ordinance that prevents unnecessary vehicle idling.

Long Term

4. Encourage and implement the necessary infrastructure that leads to and makes use of cleaner fuels, e.g. compressed natural gas (CNG), biodiesel, ethanol.

Definition: Compressed natural gas is methane stored at high pressure and can be used in place of gasoline, diesel, and propane.

Green Economy Development

Definition: A green economy is one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.

Goal 6: Improve the Sustainable Economy in DeKalb.

Short Term

1. Recruit and promote businesses engaged in the green economy, such as solar energy, alternative fuels, and others.

Information: The City can work with partners like the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation, Illinois Green Business Association, and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to develop promotion and recruitment tools to effectively target companies that are involved in the green economy.

2. Promote local businesses and institutions that are taking steps to become environmentally friendly. Build awareness about opportunities in the local green economy by highlighting the actions taken by local businesses to implement environmentally responsible policies.
3. The CEC and other applicable groups on sustainability issues will work together to create a DeKalb Businesses Going Green Award and implement a "Green Leaf" program that would involve residents selecting and ranking local businesses for their green practices.

Medium Term

4. The CEC will establish means for local community businesses to share periodically the measures they are taking to become more environmentally conscious in their operations. These means may include the City website and guest editorials in local newspapers.

Long Term

5. The CEC will work with the City's Economic Development staff and Chamber of Commerce to build a digital information hub to provide resources for job seekers and employers, as well as training and grant opportunities, in the green economy.
6. Encourage the use of appropriate vacant or abandoned property for business incubator space.

Definition: Incubator space is designed to accelerate the growth and success of entrepreneurial companies through an array of business support resources and services that could include physical space, capital, coaching, common services, and networking connections.

Alternative Energy

Goal 7: Promote, adopt policies, and provide resources and incentives to increase energy efficiency and the use of alternative energy city-wide.

Short Term

1. Pass a city-wide solar ordinance that applies to all zoning classifications.
2. Provide through public forums, presentations, the City website, and government access television information about energy audit processes for homes and businesses, and encourage home and business owners to have energy audits. Provide resources for property owners about energy efficiency and savings.

Medium Term

3. The CEC will collaborate with relevant groups to provide educational materials, resources, and learning opportunities about alternative and renewable energy for residents and businesses.

Long Term

4. Encourage residents and businesses to increase use of renewable energy.

Food Security and Healthy Living

Goal 8: Support adequate food security for all residents of DeKalb and ensure all residents have access to healthy food.

Short Term

1. Support and encourage better connections between local farmers and businesses within the City. Increase communication between the County, City, Chamber of Commerce, University of Illinois Agricultural Extension, DeKalb Farm Bureau, and other appropriate entities to meet this end.
2. Continue support for existing community gardens and collaborate with DeKalb County Community Gardens (DCCG) to locate and establish more gardens (including fruit and nut trees) on vacant property.

Medium Term

3. Work in partnership with local food providers and agencies to identify and develop strategies for eliminating food insecure areas and “food deserts” inside DeKalb.

Definitions: Food security is defined by the World Health Organization as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” More information can be found online at <http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/>.

A food desert is a geographic area where affordable and healthy food are not easy to find locally, particularly for those without access to an automobile. Food deserts can be found primarily in the northwest and southeast sections of DeKalb.

4. Promote food security, taking into consideration the rights of citizens to access food security for themselves and their families without infringing on the rights of others.
5. Provide information to the public regarding seed gathering and seed exchange networks. Provide education and encourage seed preservation and diversity in local and residential gardens and markets.

Long Term

6. Explore the development of a regional food hub, commercial kitchen, and processing facility in DeKalb. This initiative would partner with existing resources and initiatives (food banks, food pantries, community meal sites, educational institutions, etc.).

Goal 9: Take measures to enhance the health and well-being of all citizens through community education.

Short Term

1. In partnership with the CEC, create a central page on the City of DeKalb's website that serves as a collection for all "green related" information and resources. Link to the DeKalb County "Go Green" website.

Information: DeKalb County "Go Green" is an initiative to lead in the conservation of water, energy, and natural resources in the county. More information is available online at <http://dekalbcounty.org/GoGreen/index.html>.

2. In partnership with Live Healthy DeKalb County, promote community-based education on nutrition and healthy food preparation by announcing fresh food preparation and cooking educational opportunities on the local City Government access channel.

Natural Environment

Goal 10: Promote the restoration and preservation of natural environments in DeKalb.

Short Term

1. The CEC will design fliers and website content for the City planning department to provide to private property owners regarding incentives and educational programs focused on habitat preservation and restoration.

Long Term

2. Establish appropriate vegetative buffers with native plants on public lands adjacent to the Kishwaukee River and other local bodies of water. Examples of areas are local parks and golf courses along the river.

Definition: Vegetative buffers are areas of land maintained in permanent vegetation that help control air, soil, and water quality, along with other environmental problems. Also called buffer strips, these buffers trap sediment and can enhance filtration of nutrients and pesticides by slowing down runoff that could enter local surface waters.

Goal 11: Promote community education regarding the benefits of natural environments and their conservation and protection.

Short Term

1. The CEC will coordinate with local academic institutions and the University of Illinois Extension Office to provide programs informing residents of the benefits of using native plants in landscaping and reducing fertilizers, pesticides, and other lawn chemicals.
2. Provide property owners with information on sustainable property maintenance practices, such as resource efficient landscaping maintenance and cleaning supplies. Examples of sustainable property maintenance practices can be found online at http://www.wbdg.org/design/optimize_om.php.

Medium Term

3. Present community information on the impacts of run-off from washing cars at home.

Information: Impacts of washing cars on the environment are caused when water entering storm drains, unlike water that enters sanitary sewers, does not undergo treatment before it is discharged into our waterways. When cars are washed on streets and driveways, the dirty water eventually winds up in rivers, streams, creeks, and lakes. More details about the environmental impacts of car washing can be found online at http://cfpub.epa.gov/npstbx/files/KSMO_CarWashinga.pdf.

Long Term

4. The CEC will initiate a conservation program for the home and lawn to publicly acknowledge homeowners who establish effective conservation measures on their property.

Information: The Conservation@Home program run by The Conservation Foundation is an excellent example of a program to encourage and recognize homeowners. Details of the Conservation@Home program can be found online at <http://www.theconservationfoundation.org/page.php?PageID=82>.

Housing and Urban Design

Goal 12: Develop residential zoning, building codes, and ordinances for new and existing buildings to increase energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

Information: Buildings are one of the heaviest consumers of natural resources and account for a significant portion of greenhouse gas emissions. Buildings use 40% of raw materials globally and represent 73% of U.S. electricity consumption. To counter the negative effects of construction, the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating systems promote the design and construction of buildings that emphasize environmental sustainability. Illinois is one of the top ten states registered and certified as a LEED locale as of June 2012. The CEC, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and City staff will work together to establish guidelines that support sustainable construction.

Short Term

1. Follow the 2013 recommendations made to the City by America in Bloom judges. These recommendations will promote beautification of commercial, residential, and industrial areas of the City.
2. Investigate the establishment of codes for new developments that surpass the current State of Illinois Energy Code. This can be accomplished by encouraging standards equivalent to LEED certification and R standards.

3. Increase public awareness of the benefits and maintenance of native plants through community education for public and private properties.

Information: Landscaping with native wildflowers, grasses, and trees improves the environment. Natural landscaping brings a taste of wilderness to urban, suburban, and corporate settings by attracting a variety of birds, butterflies, and other animals. Once established, native plants do not need fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, or watering, thus benefiting the environment and reducing maintenance costs.

Medium Term

4. Encourage the planting of a greater variety and number of native trees and plants than current codes require.
5. Encourage developers to use 'linked development' that connects new residential or commercial development projects to either a housing or commercial redevelopment project in an older neighborhood.
6. Promote the use of permeable paving in commercial parking and pedestrian areas, as well as encourage its use in residential driveways.
7. Expand mixed-use development to require both local shopping and commerce in subdivisions to reduce automobile use.

Definition: Mixed-use development is a development that combines two or more different types of land uses, such as residential, commercial, employment, and entertainment uses, in close proximity.

8. Allow future housing developments to be of increased density where appropriate.

Information: Increased density housing works in urban areas that are close to public transportation, shopping, and employment. It encourages walkability of neighborhoods and reduces the environmental impacts to these areas such as air and water pollution.

9. Encourage developers to include environmentally-friendly features in homes.
10. Encourage adaptive reuse of existing residential, business and industrial structures to limit the need for new construction.
11. Develop a strategy to limit light pollution within the City.

Long Term

12. Establish a permitting process and encourage the construction of private "greywater" and rainwater systems.

Definition: Greywater is wastewater generated from hand basins, showers, and baths.

13. When feasible consider ordinances that provide financial and/or other incentives for builders and developers who choose to follow LEED specifications.

Solid Waste

Goal 13: Promote a zero-waste policy for the City of DeKalb, and align and coordinate the City guidelines and policies with any County zero-solid waste ordinance or solid waste plan.

Short Term

1. Adopt a policy that promotes deconstruction, as opposed to demolition, of any buildings public or private. Emphasize reuse and re-purposing of as much material as possible.

Definition: Building deconstruction is the environmentally-friendly process in which the various parts of the building are dismantled piece by piece in an attempt to save and reuse as many of the building's components as possible.

2. Work with organizers to ensure that recycling containers are provided for public events.
3. Encourage the use of reusable bags or containers wherever appropriate.

Medium Term

4. The CEC will coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce a waste exchange program that provides undervalued waste or by-product streams from one facility that other facilities can use. This can provide new revenue, savings, and environmental protection.

Long Term

5. Investigate the potential for a permanent central recycling facility within the City for non-curb-side recyclable materials, such as polystyrene and household hazardous waste, as well as a composting facility in cooperation with DeKalb County.
6. Coordinate with the Zero-Waste Task Force of DeKalb County and the City's Crime Free Housing Program to provide support for recycling at businesses and apartment buildings within DeKalb city limits.
7. Investigate requiring a letter of credit or other surety for new commercial or industrial developments involving potentially hazardous materials. This is meant to provide funding for cleanup of hazardous waste if the company ceases local operations.

Transportation

Goal 14: Integrate alternative means of transportation within the City.

Short Term

1. Increase the frequency of shuttles between DeKalb-NIU and the existing Elburn Metra Station.

Medium Term

2. Implement a "complete streets" program to improve connectivity of existing bike paths and pedestrian walkways, including widened walkways, to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians. Secure pedestrian and bicycle paths to improve safety and a sense of security.

Definition: Complete streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. People of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across streets in a community, regardless of how they are traveling. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations. More details about complete streets programs can be found online at <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>.

3. Expand bus routes to include areas that are currently underserved and increased hours of operation.
4. Require new developments and re-developments to include networks and infrastructure that provide alternate transportation modes for residents and employees.
5. Establish better integration of the existing Huskie line and TransVac systems.
6. Cooperate with DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study (DSATS) to increase bike paths between DeKalb and other communities, such as Cortland and Malta.

Long Term

7. Support further extension of the Metra train lines.

Goal 15: Promote transportation efficiency and alternate forms of transportation.

Short Term

1. Provide preferred parking for energy efficient vehicles, such as motorcycles, hybrid/electric cars, and vehicles that use primarily renewable energy sources.
2. Install more bike racks city-wide and on city buses.
3. Allow for the addition of bike lanes when street expansion projects occur. (Refer to the Illinois Bike Transportation Plan published by the Illinois Department of Transportation. <http://www.illinoisbikeplan.com/>)
4. Continue to monitor and adjust for improved traffic light synchronization in cooperation with the DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study (DSATS).

Medium Term

5. Establish a city-wide bike sharing program in partnership with Northern Illinois University.
6. Develop a strategy to become more bike friendly and recognized by groups such as the League of American Bicyclists.
7. In collaboration with Northern Illinois University create an on-line transportation hub that facilitates connectivity for ride sharing, car sharing, etc.

Long Term

8. In cooperation with private vendors investigate the construction of fueling stations for vehicles powered by renewable fuels.

9. Consider the life-cycle costs of pavement materials during project design.

Definition: Life-cycle (or whole-life costs) refer to the total cost of ownership over the life of an asset. This is also commonly referred to as “cradle-to-grave” or “womb-to-tomb” costs. Costs considered include not only the financial costs but also the environmental and social costs.

10. Increase free flow traffic conditions.

Definition: Free flow traffic conditions are when traffic moves continuously without unnecessary stopping time. These mechanisms for moving traffic reduce fuel consumption and travel delays.

Water Resources

Goal 16: Increase water conservation within the City of DeKalb.

Short Term

1. Promote educational opportunities encouraging water conservation.

Medium Term

2. Collaborate with the DeKalb Sanitary District to study the potential for reclamation of effluent from the existing treatment facility for non-potable uses.

Information: Non-potable water use reduces potable water demands and the need for additional supply facilities. Non-potable water can be used for irrigation and toilet flushing

Long Term

3. Evaluate the feasibility of creating a non-potable water distribution system throughout the City or portions of the City.
4. Evaluate the possibility of requiring the construction of a non-potable facility in conjunction with new commercial and/or residential development.

Goal 17: Identify and increase future water supply sources.

Medium Term

1. Investigate increased use of shallow aquifers for potential reduced energy and waste streams that may result.

Information: The energy required to pump the water to the ground surface is proportional to the well depth, with shallow wells requiring significantly less energy. The treatment required for shallow wells also typically consumes less chemicals and produces less hazardous waste streams than those required for deep wells.

2. Evaluate the environmental impact of radiological and chemical wastes generated from existing deep well operations.

Information: The radium removed during the treatment process is a hazardous waste stream. Typical wastewater treatment processes result in significant amounts of radium being collected within the biosolids, which are then land applied to farm fields. The EPA regulates how much radium

can be discharged per field, and once the limit is reached the field can no longer be used for biosolids disposal, increasing land application costs over time as more distant fields must be used. The chloride waste stream from the softening process is also extremely difficult and costly to remove from wastewater since it is not removable with conventional biological treatment methods.

Long Term

3. Investigate distant surface water or shallow well sources as possible supply alternatives or supplemental sources of drinking water.

Information: The deep aquifer predominantly utilized by the City extends across a large swath of the Midwest encompassing nearly all of Iowa, the northern portions of Illinois and Missouri, the southern half of Wisconsin as well as portions of Minnesota, Michigan, and Indiana. In many more urban areas, the deep aquifer is the only viable source of local supply. The population growth within the region has resulted in steadily declining water levels within the aquifer. Shallow aquifers are more local in nature with local sources of recharge, making them a more manageable and potentially dependable long-term water source. Although shallow aquifers within City limits are of fairly limited yield, higher capacity shallow aquifers have been identified by the Illinois State Water Survey near where DeKalb, Ogle, and Lee counties meet, as well as further north within the Rock River Valley. More information can be found at <http://www.isws.illinois.edu/wsp/figures.asp?id=7&pg=wsground> and http://pubs.usgs.gov/ha/ha730/ch_a/qif/A020.gif.

4. Cooperate with neighboring communities on future water supply projects to maximize environmental benefits while realizing improved economies of scale.

Goal 18: Improve storm water management ordinances and policies to improve water quality and manage water retention.

Short Term

1. Collaborate with other municipalities and the County on overlapping problems, studies, and recommendations as they relate to storm water management.

Medium Term

2. Require private property owners and contractors to manage storm water runoff and soil erosion, minimizing or preventing runoff from residential, agricultural, and/or construction areas.

Long Term

3. Restore water channels and floodplains on government-owned property, such as the NIU north 40 and DeKalb Park District facilities adjacent to the river. Collaborate with the DeKalb Soil and Water Conservation District to provide education and incentives to private property owners to do the same in order to control storm water runoff.

ED049-14

DATE: September 8, 2014
TO: Citizens Environmental Commission
FROM: Jennifer Diedrich, Economic Development Coordinator
RE: Public Comment on the Sustainability Plan

Staff has collected the following suggestions in regards to the Sustainability Plan during the public comment period of August 18 – September 8, 2014. Comments below are provided in order of date of receipt. Contact info from individuals who have submitted comments have been removed, however, contact info from organizations have been included.

COMMENT #1

- 1 - Do not sign on to the NIU "Pup" busses if you are really concerned about sustainability, and making this a walking friendly city. We have two transportation systems in place already.
- 2 - Encourage bike riding by making sure all existing trails/paths are maintained, and bike racks are available.
- 3 - Enforce traffic laws, far too many people drive with cell phones in hand, turn corners without checking for pedestrians, and run stop signs and stop lights. It isn't safe for the young or old to cross most streets.
- 4 - With today's automotive technology is it really necessary for most city trucks, ambulances and fire trucks to be kept running on streets and grocery store parking lots? Is it even reasonable to take an ambulance or fire truck to the grocery store?
- 5 - Most city sidewalks are in terrible shape. Take a walk down 4th street from Pine Street to Sycamore Road, either side of the street, and you will see just one example of what walkers have to deal with. Why work on the corners when the sidewalks in-between are in such poor condition?
- 6 - There is little real pride in maintaining the tree banks between the sidewalks and the streets. Weeds are huge, even in parks. I presume that the city crews worked overtime before the review committee come to DeKalb in 2013. What the attached document showed, and what we see when we walk are two different things.

7 - The potted plants in downtown DeKalb and on the NIU campus are not, in my opinion, examples of sustainable projects. They have to be watered and maintained by city employees. Plant wildflowers that can tolerate our climate, if you must plant anything.

DeKalb does not seem to consider the people who already live here. We are being taxed to death for schools [we don't have children, but have paid taxes on schools for over 40 years], the swimming pool [I've never been there, make it a user tax], airport [again, make it a user tax], etc., etc. Most retired people have limited incomes. If you want people to move here DeKalb must be affordable.

COMMENT #2

a. 12.12 emphasizes the importance of rewarding those who build to LEEDS specifications. That of course is important. But the suggestion to reduce impact fees is not appropriate. Impact fees are meant to pay for infrastructure associated with housing development, and even a LEEDS perfect home, still requires fire protection and has a likelihood of having children requiring schools. Please change that suggestion to something other than impact fees, or perhaps simply omit how the reward is to be given.

b. The appendix is of interest but I would suggest when you put up the final version that you separate the appendix from the body of the report, as the appendix calls too much attention to only a few of the many good suggestions and might distract from other suggestion

The rest of the comments are really minor

For 6.1 you might want to suggest the use of incubator space for such businesses thereby reusing now vacant or abandoned property

7.1 I'm not sure what this sentence means, are you talking about allowing solar panels in all districts? In any case clarification is needed

8.3 Clearly there is some conflict here that I don't understand. This point needs clarification

12.3 I'm a total advocate of native plants; encouraging their growth might require some changes in city code with respect to grass height etc. You probably should mention this

Again, an interesting report and I sincerely hope you partition its content to try to implement items one by one rather than having the whole report overwhelm staff and council by the sheer number of recommendations

COMMENT #3

A couple of suggestions to improve our environment:

Recycling: Though now retired, I spent many years working in a local office facility. One frustration that I had was the lack of recycling of paper. I actually brought non-confidential paper home so that I could put it out with our regular recycling. Apparently, private trash disposal companies do not handle recycling in the DeKalb area. I feel strongly that it should be



mandated that all disposal firms operating in the DeKalb area must provide (at least) paper recycling.

Along the same lines, at events such as Corn Fest, bottles and cans comprise the bulk of the trash, yet there are no provisions to recycle anything. Autumn on Parade, in Oregon, IL, has clear plastic bags on holders for cans and bottles everywhere there is a trash can. DeKalb could follow their example, at least with cans with round holes for recycling at many locations downtown. Besides saving landfill space, the income from the cans could be donated to a worthy non-profit community organization.

COMMENT #4

Proposal for sustainability number 1:

Officially join the cities of DeKalb and Sycamore into one but separate name entities - create a twin city with one government. This would create a city of some major size. Allow for a 15 year phase in to fully unite into a then medium size city. Such a population center could bring new industry and jobs to the area. Industries to consider would be bio tech, medical tech, trauma treatment center, advanced labs, as well as other clean industries.

Number 2:

Bring passenger train out to DeKalb, join the other counties who have such transportation.

Number 3:

Cut under the rail line at 4th and Lincoln to allow trucks and cars to pass under the rail line, thus freeing the city.

Number 4:

Develop a city/ industry relations program which assists development needs, but not a tax payer expense.

Number 5:

Hold/ sponsor an annual conference of small towns and exchange ideas for sustainability.

COMMENT #5

I wanted to commend the Task Force for its work and recommendations and to note that to get citizens to behave responsibly may require many repeated public service announcements and educational articles. An additional step that I would like to see taken eventually would be a small tax on single-use plastic bags at grocery stores. More progressive communities have actually outlawed bags, but I believe a tax would be appropriate. As absurd as it seems, many more people will bring their own re-usable bags to the store rather than pay 5 cents per bag. Plastic is damaging to the environment and the plastic bags littering the farm fields are unsightly. Finding a way to reduce their use hurts no one except the plastic factories.

COMMENT #6

I think DeKalb needs to be more "bicycle" friendly. We need to educate the public that bicyclists have the same rights to be on the roads as cars. If more people biked there would be less problems with clean air, a target of the policy as well as added health benefits another target



area, healthy living. Maybe the city could reward or encourage citizens or Companies whose employees commute by bike.

We also need to maintain and add to the existing bike lanes. An example of this is First Street near Dresser. The bike lane "sharrows" in some spots are badly deteriorated and need to be kept up.

I am all for using native plants in landscaping as well as maintaining buffer strips in certain areas. Again how about encouraging private citizens to restore their back yards into these types of areas? Another win, win situation for everyone.

I would like the city to promote the "Harvesting of Rainwater as an alternate source of water. This would also reduce run off.

As I said its good start.

COMMENT #7

I am happy to go on record as stating that I hate roundabouts. They do not work here in the United States because we drive on the right side of the road. They work in England and India, where people drive on the left side of the road. There are roundabouts near the town where my parents live. No matter how many years' roundabouts are in a location, too many people have no idea how to drive on them, and that makes them dangerous for fender benders. I drive way out of the way to avoid them.

I already wrote about idle free vehicles:

<http://www.daily-chronicle.com/2011/12/20/shelton-lets-stop-idling-on-clean-air-issue/apcsf6e/>

The NIU North 40 and that whole area near the river floods like crazy. I already told the President of NIU and Bill Nicklas that the golf course should be put back into that area and there should be no more additional buildings. That area should remain a green space because of the flooding. I would be in favor of having the Army Corps of Engineers do a flood mitigation study. I would not be in favor of private consultants doing a study.

Plants in the ground use half to about one third less water than plants in artificial planters. I would be in favor of flowers in the parkways and/or lawns compared to planters. The planters that are there now are counter-intuitive for sustainability. There is a lot of vehicle idling while city staff water those planters, which has to be done frequently. Flowers in the ground would reduce gas-powered mowing.

I do not remember encouraging new construction projects to choose dual flush toilets. That should be added.

Generally, people and businesses should be encouraged to follow green initiatives rather than using a punitive approach.



Generally, sustainability should also include economic sustainability--any green projects should not be unaffordable.

COMMENT #8

In response to the call for public input into the draft Sustainability Plan, I ask that the Citizen Environmental Commission consider recommending a reduction in the amount of light pollution we create.

Much of this could be achieved by covering street lights and lighting in commercial parking lots with low-cost collars that direct the light downwards. Reducing the required brightness level in certain areas could help the City and its businesses recover much of the expense through lower utility costs. And keeping the direct light down reduces glare: the increased contrast between the darker skies and the lighted ground will make those things (cars, pedestrians) on the ground that we really need to see brighter by comparison. This could provide a substantial safety benefit.

Numerous scholarly articles have been written that point out the health effects of too much light at night. Among them is the disruption of our normal sleep cycles, which can affect both our mental and physical well-being.

In 1987, when a friend of mine who lived in the light-polluted suburbs came to visit, he told me "one reason I like coming to DeKalb is that I can actually see stars when I come here." In most parts of town now, this is no longer true. One observation I hear from many long-time residents is that our community's rural character is quickly going away. However, if the City were to adopt policies and practices to reduce the amount of light unnecessarily shining upwards and sideways, and to dim the light we don't really need, we could gain back the night sky and improve our quality of life.

COMMENT #9

Congratulations on the Committee's success in creating a plan that is well-organized, cost conscious, and contains fresh ideas while remaining free of jargon that would impede understanding.

I am particularly impressed with the Solid Waste and Water Sections, and intrigued by the thought of a Waste Exchange, which I hope the City will adopt as a pilot program.

In general, I am less enamored of ideas for new ordinances. For example, I am not sure we need a solar ordinance as I already know people who have installed solar without one. Perhaps there is a case to be made for the necessity of such an ordinance, and if so I hope the Committee shall make it.

Also, regarding this vague, medium-term goal for food security:

"Work toward ordinances and zoning changes that promote food security, taking into consideration the rights of citizens to access food security for themselves and their families without infringing on the rights of others."



If the Committee can micro-manage air quality by recommending an outdoor smoking ban, it could certainly address the desirability/acceptability of vegetable gardens on front lawns and chickens in the back!

Many thanks to the Committee for its hard work and the opportunity to comment on it.

COMMENT #10

several good things (if implemented correctly) in the plan, but several concerns...

1) Green Economy Development

Goal 6: Improve the Sustainable Economy in DeKalb.

Short Term

1. Recruit and promote businesses engaged in the green economy, such as solar energy, alternative fuels, and others.

So, why are wind turbines outlawed in DeKalb? Yes, I can understand that a 60' tall 3-blade tower in my back yard would be rather disruptive to the neighborhood, but there are now more and more efficient, quiet, affordable vertical and horizontal turbines entering the market, and many are small & unobtrusive enough (both visually and noise-wise) to allow their placement on garages, houses, outbuildings, etc.

Goal 7: Promote, adopt policies, and provide resources and incentives to increase energy efficiency and the use of alternative energy city-wide.

Short Term

1. Pass a city-wide solar ordinance that applies to all zoning classifications.

This scares me... I envision the usual "over-reaction" to a technology that is not understood by the decision makers that invariably leads to over-regulation, under-utilization, and the general discouraged feeling by the citizenry about attempting improvements. I utilize solar panels, and have many friends throughout the world who also do... Over-regulation will do nothing but harm to the city, state, country, and world! Safety is important, of course, and care must be taken to install them properly, but it should not be a nightmare process, and sadly, after living in DeKalb/Sycamore since 1967, I fear the worst.

2) Natural Environment

Goal 11: Promote community education regarding the benefits of natural environments and their conservation and protection.

Short Term

1. The CEC will coordinate with local academic institutions and the University of Illinois Extension Office to provide programs informing residents of the benefits of using native plants in landscaping and reducing fertilizers, pesticides, and other lawn chemicals.

That is wonderful to see, but you laud the benefits of some of the most intensive herbicide and pesticide users in:

Goal 10: Promote the restoration and preservation of natural environments in DeKalb.

Long Term

2. Establish appropriate vegetative buffers with native plants on public lands adjacent to the



Kishwaukee River and other local bodies of water. Examples of areas are local parks and golf courses along the river.

I have many years in grounds keeping including 4 years at Kishwaukee Country Club (1976?-1980)... INTENSE chemical usage... And, true, there do exist buffer zones between the manicured/mowed areas and the river that do help stop runoff of chemicals in time of heavy rains, but these are not nearly enough (imho) to mitigate the effects. The major problem is farm run-off, of course, but that is beyond the City's control; however, they do have a voice to express opinions to the County.

3) Housing and Urban Design

Goal 12: Develop residential zoning, building codes, and ordinances for new and existing buildings to increase energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

Medium Term

7. Expand mixed-use development to require both local shopping and commerce in subdivisions to reduce automobile use.

So, quit giving "big box" stores tax breaks to build on Sycamore Road. How about some incentives for businesses downtown? There used to be many neighborhood grocery stores in all the neighborhoods. Then they went away. Then there were major chains in downtown DeKalb: A & P (now home to Faranda's), National T (was JoAnn Fabrics for years, now bank/offices next to the old First Nat'l Bank), Piggly-Wiggly (later Eagle and Sullivan's) on S. 4th St. Where are the grocery stores now? You cannot get to them without driving/riding. IF people could shop close to home, I believe that most would be willing to pay a bit more for that convenience. This would also reduce the number of cars on the road, the amount of pollution created, and make the downtown and surrounding areas more viable.

Long Term

11. Establish a permitting process and encourage the construction of private "greywater" and rainwater systems.

Why is this "Long Term"? Why not include the management of water in conjunction with:

Natural Environment

Goal 11

Short term

2. Provide property owners with information on sustainable property maintenance practices, such as resource efficient landscaping maintenance and cleaning supplies.

Goal 11

Long Term

4. The CEC will initiate a conservation program for the home and lawn to publicly acknowledge homeowners who establish effective conservation measures on their property.

Seems a though there is a lot of items in this plan that overlap, and have been broken into their own separate areas

4) Transportation

Goal 15

Long Term

9. Increase free flow traffic conditions with the use of roundabouts and interchanges.



Roundabouts? Blech... They, to the uninitiated, are more dangerous... pedestrians hate them, btw...

5) Water Resources

Again, a major overlap with other items (Natural Environment, Housing, etc. etc.)... Can't many of these be combined to give 1) a smaller document, and 2) a unified look at what a person would/could/should do?

One complaint I do have is that a lot of the city lighting is not the most efficient in the light polluting area, being post-top rather than the less light-polluting shoe-box or cobra-head styles. They do look nice, however.

Pet peeve... "Cutesy" street signs do not make it... they should be READABLE by all... So, white on green is a major failure, even though someone thought that was a wonderful idea. At night, they are terrible. Black letters on white signs are still the most legible, day and night.

COMMENT #11

I wanted to provide input on an issue that may or may not be part of the sustainability plan for the City of DeKalb.

There have been times when I have driven from Sycamore to downtown DeKalb on Sycamore Road, and I have hit every single stop light (I think I counted 14 one time) on the way to Lincoln Highway. Not only is it frustrating but it is a waste of gas and causes the overuse of brakes (which puts asbestos particles in the air). Usually it happens if I am at the head of the line when stopped at a stop light; if this happens, it seems like I hit all the subsequent stop lights as I go south on Sycamore Road.

There are other lights that could use tweaking.

For example, the lights at North First and Augusta/Pine could use an adjustment - I find that I sit at Augusta waiting for the light to turn quite frequently. The timing changes when NIU lets out, but it feels like that timing should be controlled by need as well (being tripped by cars waiting on Augusta or Pine).

Also, the lights at North Fourth and Pine could stand to be revised. People sit at Pine for an excessive amount of time waiting for the light to change.

I don't know who controls the stop light cycles - perhaps it is the state that handles that. However, it would be worth having the city look into this issue from an environmental point of view. A reevaluation of traffic patterns and flow on Fourth, First and Lincoln Highway could potentially save gas for residents of the town.

Thank you so much for seeking input.

COMMENT #12

1. After being involved in great detail with the movement to save Kiwanis Park, it was apparent that the governmental bodies needed to establish and maintain better lines of



communication. This would be communication between elected officials, not just hired staff. We were delighted that the park will continue to be used as soccer fields as this has all sorts of positive impacts for the environment. This certainly fits within the concept of the Sustainability Plan. What a wonderful "save" for the community. Now if only we could envision some redevelopment for that South Fourth corridor...the positive impact could be astounding. It took a great deal of effort on the part of several people, but the battle was won and our efforts will impact our community for a long time.

So...more thought to improving the South Fourth corridor.

2. Another corridor which could use a huge boost is the **east entry into the city on 38**. Do I need to say more? What a horrible entry into the city! That has some potential that could certainly make a difference. My fantasy has always been to bring in some of the folks from our developer community and give them a short term assignment to "brain storm" about what to do with our various corridors. Some visioning and exchange of ideas could take place. Some of our financial institutions could take part in this visioning. Certainly these entities have done well over the years and this would be a good way for them to "give back". Of course there should be a profit margin incentive, but instead of let's say a \$10,000 profit, they would get a \$5,000 profit and still come out ahead. That's why this is a fantasy...I can also picture my head on a stake for suggesting something like this.

3. Read in the paper the other day about an interesting idea for the North 40...I believe the gentleman had suggested a type of **outdoor theater**. The more I thought of his idea, the better it sounded. There is such a theater up in Wisconsin, way up nestled in the hills. Years ago I saw a Midsummer Night's Dream performed there...it was really neat. I suppose the man had in mind something like that or a modified Ravinia. This idea could have all sorts of positive results as it would help the local economy, preserve open space, encourage relationships between NIU and DeKalb. I believe NIU has a very good drama department.

4. **No more multiple housing and open up more green space in congested areas**. If I have heard anything over and over again, especially after the Kiwanis project and subsequent involvement with the Irongate development, it is that we do not need more housing and what a mess we have in and around the Greek Row area.

5. **Redevelopment, rehab** (or whatever title it might be given) **for older neighborhoods**. I'm thinking of something similar to the old DeKalb/Pond/Fisk project of several years past where a few houses were razed to be replaced by similar, smaller scale houses and others were remodeled. We ended up with affordable housing and a neighborhood rejuvenated. There are many houses which are now rentals or totally empty that could use a boost so that families can once more occupy them. What about a program that helps some capable people to purchase and flip houses? For example, if I knew how to do some carpentry and a friend of mine could do plumbing, we could purchase a house, fix it and sell it. However we might need a little bit of seed money to get started...money that could later be paid back so such a program could continue.





September 5, 2014

Jennifer Diedrich, Economic Development Coordinator
City of DeKalb Municipal Building
200 South 4th Street
DeKalb, IL. 60115

Re: Draft Sustainability Plan comments

Dear Jennifer:

Live Health DeKalb County commends the DeKalb Environmental Commission for the tremendous undertaking in the development of the City of DeKalb Sustainability Plan with the goal of providing a high quality of life for current and future residents. We applaud you on your engagement of all segments of the community in the development of this plan as well as the recognition that priorities may shift over time. Your recommendations are well thought out and are supported by definitions which are easily understandable regardless of subject matter.

The Sustainability Plan incorporates several initiatives of Live Healthy DeKalb County to include Active Transportation, Healthy Food and Beverage, Food Security and to some degree Workplace Wellness.

Goal 8 : Food Security and Health Living

The short and long term tasks outlined in the plan are in line with the initiatives of Live Healthy DeKalb County. A few items for consideration that might be incorporated in the report are as follows:

- Given the suggested expansion of the garden program and types of gardens consideration should be given to how to “sustain” this initiative. Examples might be a more formalized volunteer group, adoption of gardens by the community similar to adopt highway programs, as well as engagement of the agricultural community through 4H, as well as school based agricultural programs.
- In our experience, we know that there are multiple organizations who are attempting to support families in need of food. Defining geographic areas, mapping these providers and taking a step back to look at duplication, voids as well as opportunities to pull resources might be a first task when addressing food deserts.

Goal 9: Community Education

- Reaching the underserved, minority populations is a difficult task. One vehicle might be the faith based community or the neighborhood school; working collaboratively to identify barriers and develop educational programs around

these barriers. (First DeKalb United Methodist Church is already doing neighborhood outreach for student after school day learning and summer enrichment opportunities that includes meals/snacks followed by homework help or focused extracurricular learning.) This would involve multiple resources as well as multiple strategies. Utilizing school gardens to engage parents and students that are vested in the garden while learning about the health benefits could be beneficial. An example would be a video of harvest, followed by meal preparation which is then shared electronically. We would support a multi-faceted approach to education.

Goal 14/15 Transportation

- In the short term it is recommended that a Complete Streets Policy be adopted as a planning tool in years 1-3, with implementation to occur for all new developments and redevelopments. In addition, the existing infrastructure of roadways should be under constant review to expand opportunities for bike lanes and shared road opportunities in their current condition as well as when repairs are completed.
- Short term efforts for bike trail expansion should integrate with policies as much as possible with the Illinois Bike Transportation Plan published by the Illinois Department of Transportation.
- Short term goals should incorporate construction of missing trail links identified in the DSATS Pedestrian and Bike Transportation Plan such as Dresser Road between Normal Road and Annie Glidden Road, and along the north side of Twombly Road where missing east of Edens Garden Subdivision. These trails are eligible to be funded by Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) grants.
- Short term and middle range plans should evaluate way finding signs so the community will become more comfortable in biking as a mode of transportation.
- Add an incentive program to businesses whom purchase bike racks for their store fronts, address restrictions as a result of zoning that might be a detriment to the installation of bike racks.
- Medium Term: The City of DeKalb should begin to work on becoming a bike friendly community and be recognized as such from a national self assessment rating group such as the League of American Bicyclist.
- Safe Routes to Schools grants should be explored with the School Districts to take advantage of funding opportunities and pedestrian/biking safety improvements along school walking routes.

We hope these suggestions are considered as part of the Plan. Please feel free to contact the following Live Healthy DeKalb County leaders:

Lisa Cumings, Community Health Liaison at Kishwaukee Hospital at 815 756-1521 x152426, lcumings@kishhospital.org

Kara Gallagher, Director of Strategic Health Initiatives at the YMCA, 815 756-9577 ext 38, kgallagher@kishymca.org

Cindy Capek, Assistant Administrator, DeKalb County Health Department, 815 748-2431, ccapek@dekalbcounty.org

Joel Maurer, former DeKalb City Engineer, 618 Hanna Court, DeKalb, 815 901-8651, jmaurer618@comcast.net

Very truly yours,


Joel Maurer

September 8, 2014

Jennifer Diedrich, Economic Development Coordinator
City of DeKalb Municipal Building
200 South Fourth Street
DeKalb, IL 60115



Northern Illinois University
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of Biological Sciences
DeKalb, Illinois 60115-2828
815-753-1753
Fax: 815-753-0461
www.bios.niu.edu

Dear Ms. Diedrich:

All of the individuals whose signatures appear below are members of the Plant Molecular Biology faculty of the Department of Biological Sciences at Northern Illinois University. All of us have many years of experience in the area of transgenic plants, plant molecular biology, plant physiology and sustainability. Two of us in particular (Sims and Stafstrom) are recognized locally as NIU experts in the area of transgenic plant technology as applied to agriculture, that is, GMOs.

We have major concerns with a statement found on page 7 of the Draft City of DeKalb Sustainability plan (Goal 8: Medium-term Goal #5). That statement reads in part:

"Provide education and encourage the use of non-GMO foods in local and residential gardens and markets."

We find the above statement scientifically inaccurate and misleading with respect to the actual use of GMO plants, as well as their safety and effect on the environment. We submit the following as representing our detailed and expert knowledge in this area:

- To our knowledge, no transgenic seeds or plants are licensed for growth in local or residential gardens. All GMO traits currently in use are only planted as part of commercial agriculture production. Thus, the above statement simply doesn't apply.
- Of further concern is the implication contained in the above statement, that GMO plants are incompatible with sustainability or somehow present a threat to food security or the environment. Such a supposition is, and would be, completely inaccurate.
- GMO plants have a documented and proven record of safety, and are regulated by federal agencies including the USDA, EPA and FDA that have certified their safety prior to release.
- GMO traits currently in widespread use, including herbicide tolerance and insect resistance are generally MORE environmentally sustainable than prior practices (e.g. see the 2010 report from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences on the "Impact of Genetically Engineered Crops on Farm Sustainability in the United States").

We therefore find the above statement to be inaccurate and misleading and urge that it be completely eliminated from the City of DeKalb's Sustainability Plan.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Thomas L. Sims.

Thomas L. Sims, Ph.D.

Handwritten signature of Joel P. Stafstrom.

Joel P. Stafstrom, Ph.D.

Handwritten signature of Melvin Duvall.

Melvin Duvall, Ph.D.

Handwritten signature of Gabriel Holbrook.

Gabriel Holbrook, Ph.D.

Please note that the above statements represent our personal judgment and expertise as plant molecular biologists, and do not represent any official view of Northern Illinois University.