

MARKET ST



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Market Street brings original insights and clarity to the evaluation and revitalization of the places where people live, work, and grow. Through honest and informed assessments, *Market Street* can equip you with the tools to create meaningful change. Our solutions successfully merge our experience and expertise with the economic and social realities of our clients. *Market Street's* community partners are successful at creating stronger programs, increasing operational budgets, and creating new jobs with competitive wages that improve the quality of life in their communities.

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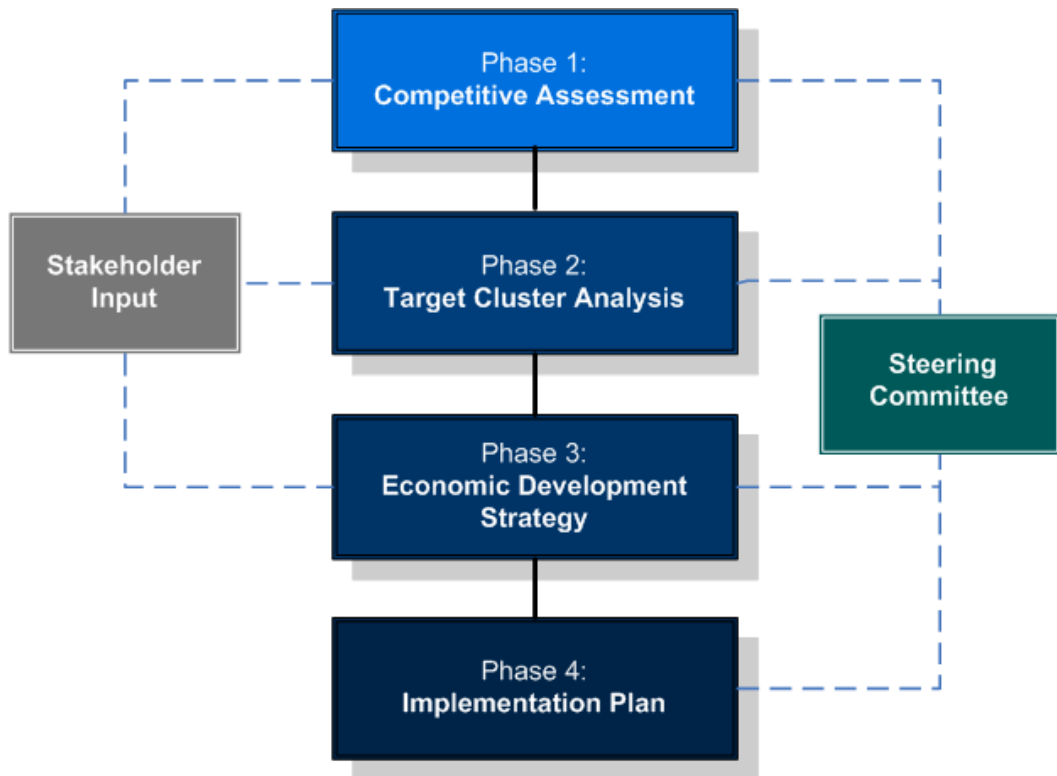
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Quantum Growth Partnership and the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce hired *Market Street Services*, a national community, economic, and workforce development consulting firm based in Atlanta, Georgia, to thoroughly assess the state of the region and to help create a new *Economic Development Strategy* to guide the Partnership through its next five-year implementation cycle. The planning process is comprised of four phases, as outlined below:



- ✓ **Stakeholder Input (October 2010):** To gather the perspectives of community members and project stakeholders, *Market Street* spent two days in Greater Springfield conducting interviews and focus groups. An online survey accessible through the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce website resulted in nearly 200 responses that further highlighted local issues, concerns, and opportunities. Findings from this process were incorporated into the *Competitive Assessment* and will inform the formation of the *Economic Development Strategy*.
- ✓ **Competitive Assessment (December 2010):** This report assesses the region's trends and conditions in terms of People (demographic, social, and workforce characteristics), Prosperity (realities of the economy), and Place (quality of life and infrastructure). In this report, the Springfield metro is compared to the state and the nation, as well as three peer regions (Bloomington-Normal, IL; Rochester, MN; and Topeka, KS).

- ✓ **Target Cluster Analysis (January 2011):** Building on the extensive research and data analysis from the *Competitive Assessment*, the *Target Cluster Analysis* identifies the Springfield region’s clusters of economic activity that are best positioned to support future growth in the region. Target clusters are assessed based on national economic trends, occupational dynamics, detailed business sector composition, existing regional assets, and an understanding of key competitive advantages such as workforce skill levels, geographical and infrastructure advantages, and educational programs. The final product presents a list of clearly defined target sectors and a discussion of the opportunities and challenges associated with effectively supporting their growth.
- ✓ **Economic Development Strategy (February/March 2011):** The *Strategy* represents the culmination of all research completed and presents action items geared toward addressing challenges and capitalizing on opportunities for visionary growth. Findings from each of the previous phases are used to identify core goal areas. Objectives and action steps are provided for each goal area. The *Strategy* serves as a tool to unify Greater Springfield’s public and private leadership behind a consensus blueprint for the community’s future, and set the agenda for the continued development and progression of the Quantum Growth Partnership.
- ✓ **Implementation Plan (April 2011):** While the *Economic Development Strategy* represents “what” the region needs to do to achieve its preferred future, the *Implementation Plan* will determine “how” that will be done. This report will include a capacity assessment, a first-year action plan, a five-year action plan, budget, performance measures and benchmarks, and will determine which organization(s) should lead plan implementation efforts.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Market Street would like to acknowledge the Steering Committee that shepherded the development of this *Strategy* for Greater Springfield. Their dedication of time and effort to inform and review the research deliverables and strategic recommendations has led to the creation of the *Economic Development Strategy* that will enable the Greater Springfield region to create a more prosperous future.

The members of the Steering Committee are listed below:

Tom Gihl	<i>Illinois National Bank (Steering Committee Co-Chair)</i>
Dr. Charlotte Warren	<i>Lincoln Land Community College (Steering Committee Co-Chair)</i>
Michael Aiello	<i>R.W. Troxell & Company</i>
Dr. Harry Berman	<i>University of Illinois Springfield</i>
Mayor Frank Edwards	<i>City of Springfield</i>
Steve Dove	<i>City of Springfield</i>
Howard Peters III	<i>Springfield Urban League</i>
Sergio Pecori	<i>Hanson Professional Services</i>
Ron Pulera	<i>WAND-TV</i>
Louis Dixon	<i>Crawford, Murphy & Tilly</i>
Chairman Andy Van Meter	<i>Sangamon County</i>
Brian McFadden	<i>Sangamon County</i>
Allan Lauher	<i>Building Trades & Construction Council</i>
Mike Zahn	<i>Basic Crafts</i>
Tim Rowles	<i>The Springfield Project/Springfield Black Chamber of Commerce</i>
Bob Ritz	<i>St. John's Hospital</i>
Shelly Heideman	<i>Faith Coalition for the Common Good</i>
Kenley Wade	<i>Wade Management Consulting Services</i>
Dr. Walter Milton	<i>Springfield Public Schools District 186</i>
John Kelker	<i>United Way of Central Illinois</i>
Rev. T. Ray McJunkins	<i>Union Baptist Church</i>
Walt Lafferty	<i>State Journal Register</i>
Mike Pence	<i>Bank of Springfield, Chairman, GSCC</i>
Craig Gilson	<i>Ameren</i>
Cheryl Welge	<i>Ameren</i>
Mike Farmer	<i>City of Springfield</i>
Valera Yazell	<i>Making Waves</i>
Karen Callaway	<i>H.D. Smith</i>
Dick Madden	<i>The Horace Mann Companies</i>
Paul Hayes	<i>Sheet Metal Workers</i>
Mitch Johnson	<i>Memorial Health System</i>
Dr. Kevin Dorsey	<i>SIU School of Medicine</i>
Dr. Phil Davis	<i>SIU School of Medicine</i>

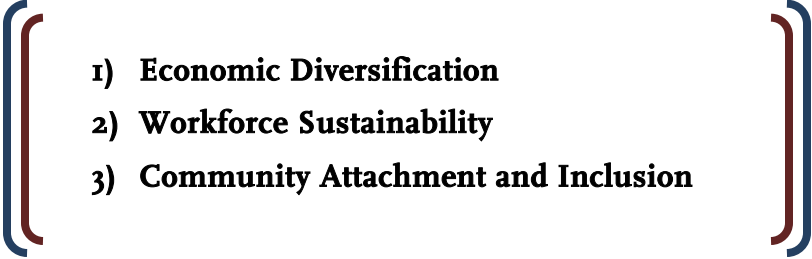
STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The process of developing this *Strategy* began with significant qualitative input gathered from multiple focus groups, interviews, and an online survey that garnered hundreds of responses. This input was complemented by the findings of two research documents, the *Competitive Assessment* and the *Target Cluster Analysis*. This qualitative and quantitative input has thoroughly informed the development of this *Strategy*, and was supplemented by the guidance of the Steering Committee.

This *Strategy* is intended to build upon successful efforts of the Quantum Growth Partnership (Q5) in recent years while recommending bold new strategies to guide the region forward. The initial Q5 implementation cycle illustrated that the region has strong volunteer leadership that is committed to investing in a stronger and more prosperous Sangamon County. This *Strategy* will undoubtedly challenge these leaders to elevate their commitment in the years ahead.

While this process was initiated by the Quantum Growth Partnership, it was done on behalf of all of Sangamon County, its numerous communities, and its many partners. Accordingly, this *Economic Development Strategy* is a strategy for the entire region and not a single organization. It will require the commitment of many partners throughout the community in order to be successfully implemented.

This process has identified three priority goal areas for the Quantum Growth Partnership and the Greater Springfield region to pursue in the years to come. These three goal areas are:

- 
- 1) Economic Diversification**
 - 2) Workforce Sustainability**
 - 3) Community Attachment and Inclusion**

While these three goal areas do not perfectly align with those of the last Q5 strategic plan, *Market Street Services* and the Steering Committee recognize that the five overarching goal areas of the last Q5 initiative remain priorities for the region and these needs are adequately addressed in each of the three aforementioned goal areas.

(ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION)

Goal: **The Greater Springfield region will be home to a diverse and growing economy that provides economic opportunities for existing and future residents.**

What: The Quantum Growth Partnership (Q5) will continue to support the expansion of economic opportunities in the Greater Springfield region through strategic investments and programmatic enhancements. Emphasis will be placed on efforts that align with the region’s targeted clusters of economic activity. This includes but is not limited to improvements in the region’s infrastructure and site readiness to support new manufacturing and logistics opportunities, as well as continued emphasis on the development of the Mid-Illinois Medical District and the expansion of tourism. Successful programs that support the retention and expansion of existing business and the development of new entrepreneurial ventures will be enhanced, while new services will be introduced to create an environment that is more supportive of innovation. The Partnership will promote these new investments to internal audiences within the region while effectively marketing the region’s competitive advantages to external audiences through various media channels and outreach efforts.

Why: As of 2010, local, state, and federal government employment represents more than one-third of all employment in the Springfield metropolitan area. Economic growth has stagnated. Between 1980 and 1995, the private sector added more than 21,000 jobs in Sangamon County (equivalent to 39.7 percent growth). Between 1995 and 2010, the private sector added fewer than 3,400 jobs (equivalent to 4.5 percent growth). Numerous residents expressed concerns that employment opportunities would not be available for their children in the years and decades ahead. In today’s highly competitive global economy, the Quantum Growth Partnership and the entire Springfield region must continue to be proactive in their approach to economic development.

What if... ...the private sector continues to stagnate? Will the next generation of Springfield residents have a variety of employment opportunities or will individuals with certain skill sets be forced to search for employment elsewhere? What if government finances further cripple the state and significantly impact employment levels and incomes in the region? What if the region loses its vision – and associated opportunities – related to Medical District and infrastructure development? Will similar opportunities present themselves, or will Greater Springfield’s leadership create these opportunities?

Objective 1: Develop and promote physical infrastructure, sites, and services that increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of Greater Springfield to prospective logistics and manufacturing companies during the site selection process.

ACTION 1.1: Establish the Logistics Alliance of Greater Springfield to provide strategic direction in the development of the region’s transportation, distribution, and logistics assets.

- Ensure that the Alliance includes representation from private businesses, education and training institutions, public-sector officials, and other key economic development and industry professionals. Assign relevant GSCC staff member(s) to serve on the Alliance.
- Develop a mission statement in support of the cluster’s development, determine optimal membership levels and meeting frequencies, and establish follow-up protocols for all identified issues and opportunities that emerge from Alliance discussions.
- Leverage the Alliance to provide policy insights and establish legislative priorities; assist with the identification and recruitment of prospective businesses; provide strategic guidance on optimal media, messages and markets to prioritize marketing efforts; and coordinate strategic investments that support logistics cluster development.
- Task the Alliance with serving as the de facto leader for the advancement of logistics and manufacturing activity in Greater Springfield, including outreach to and coordination with local, state, and federal representatives that advance political, financial, and resource support for strategic recommendations contained within this *Economic Development Strategy* and other priority initiatives identified by the Alliance.

BEST PRACTICE: THE MEMPHIS REGIONAL LOGISTICS COUNCIL (MEMPHIS, TN)

The Memphis Regional Logistics Council (RLC) was established in 2004 by the Memphis Regional Chamber as a way to strengthen both the Memphis metro area and the tri-state region as a whole. By addressing Memphis’ ever-growing, ever-changing role in global distribution and logistics, the council works to establish the Memphis region as a leader in the industry, and to better tap into its role as “America’s Distribution Center.”

The RLC is comprised of logistics and distribution professionals who lend their insights to the city’s myriad logistics and distribution issues. Members include trucking and drainage companies, freight forwarders, steamship lines, railroads, air carriers, contractors, developers, barge lines, public warehouses, and distributors.

At meetings, professionals are encouraged to share their ideas and expertise regarding how to improve Memphis’ ability to be a logistics center. The council includes four main committees: infrastructure, marketing, workforce development, and strategic alliances. The infrastructure committee recently helped execute the contract for the city’s first ever regional infrastructure plan which looks at how air, rail, road, and water converge in Memphis to move goods in and out of the city. The marketing committee works to brand the community and promote Memphis’ assets. The workforce development committee focuses on promoting the city’s economy by improving the quality of its workforce. The strategic alliance committee works to develop partnerships critical to logistics growth.

Source: Memphis Chamber of Commerce

- Task the Alliance with the coordination and programming of a Central Illinois Logistics Summit. The Summit should bring together state and local economic development professionals, business development staff from relevant utilities, railroad executives, airport leadership, industry experts, and other relevant stakeholders to engage in facilitated discussions of key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the future of freight distribution in the region.

ACTION 1.2: Conduct a Site Readiness Evaluation of all marketable industrial sites, develop a Site Readiness Plan, and work with Ameren to apply the InSite certification program.

Major utilities throughout the country have begun implementing site certification programs in recent years. Certified sites are typically large industrial sites that have been evaluated by utilities, city officials, economic development entities, and engineering firms to determine the degree to which they are “shovel-ready.” Shovel-ready sites are those which have completed a variety of pre-development plans and evaluations, including but not limited to site mapping, surveying, environmental studies/audits, soil analysis, infrastructure planning, utility extension or extension design, etc. Certification programs seek to communicate to prospective companies and developers that a site has met a series of important standards, ensuring that it is ready for immediate development.

- In cooperation with Ameren representatives, evaluate all available industrial sites for their “shovel-readiness” and ability to meet criteria for InSite certification. Work with City Water, Light & Power (CWLP) to apply similar standards and develop a certification program.
- Identify barriers to development for individual sites, including infrastructural investments, ownership issues, and speculative site preparations that would increase the attractiveness to prospects, leveraging existing research conducted by strategic partners of the Quantum Growth Partnership (Q5) including but not limited to GSCC, Ameren, and CWLP.
- Work with key partners including property owners, governments, utilities, and railroads to develop a Site Readiness Plan to improve the marketability of existing industrial sites based on the findings of the Site Readiness Evaluation.
- Leverage relevant state and local resources, as funding is available, to support such improvements.

ACTION 1.3: Advance development of an airport industrial park - the Airport Commerce Park - to support long-term expansion of freight capacity at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport.

The Airport Authority currently owns nearly 130 acres adjacent to Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport, of which roughly 90 acres is currently developable. Potential exists to transform this land into a marketable industrial park if adequate investments are made to push the site towards shovel-readiness.

- ⦿ Assist the Airport Authority in coordinating obstruction evaluation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), including but not limited to the filing of a Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration (Form 7460).
- ⦿ Work with representatives from the Airport Authority to begin conducting preliminary site analyses and making necessary investments to prepare “shovel-ready” site(s) on land adjacent to the airport to support warehousing, wholesale distribution, manufacturing, and other related activities.
- ⦿ Identify barriers to development including proximity to the interstate and other infrastructure issues. Develop a series of options for mitigating these barriers through public and private investment.
- ⦿ Conduct site analyses, environmental studies, infrastructure extension design studies, and other necessary preparations.
- ⦿ Provide necessary assistance to the Airport and development community throughout the site development process and aggressively market property consistent with other site promotion efforts.

ACTION 1.4: Evaluate the long-term viability of developing of a rail-truck intermodal facility in Sangamon County.

Although there is currently a relatively limited manufacturing and distribution presence in Sangamon County sufficient to warrant full private sector development of a rail-truck intermodal facility, future opportunities may exist to develop such a facility on existing rail yards owned and operated by Class I or regional rail lines. The region stands to benefit from an early planning process that seeks to identify the best ways in which the County’s logistics and manufacturing operations can capitalize on existing intermodal facilities in nearby metropolitan areas, while exploring the viability of public-private investment to support long-term development of a similar facility in Sangamon County.

- ⦿ Work with the Logistics Alliance of Greater Springfield to:
 - ✓ study best practice models of public-private development of intermodal facilities
 - ✓ evaluate ways in which the region’s wholesale distributors and manufacturers can best leverage nearby inter-modal facilities, and ways in which the region can best connect to these facilities
 - ✓ coordinate outreach to key railroads with potential interest in developing an intermodal terminal in Sangamon County
 - ✓ research and establish criteria for site identification and evaluation
 - ✓ identify grants and other funding sources to support feasibility analyses and planning
 - ✓ potentially engage a third-party to facilitate the evaluation process and conduct feasibility studies

- ✓ coordinate the evaluation process with other relevant efforts such as the potential development of an airport industrial park and/or pursuit of foreign trade zone designation
- ✓ identify potential funding sources, including public monies, to support development
- ✓ evaluate a variety of operational models to facilitate development and operation depending on the needs and interest level of private rail partners

ACTION 1.5: Evaluate the near-term viability and benefit of seeking subzone status of the Central Illinois Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ 114), and the long-term viability of applying for general-purpose FTZ designation encompassing industrial sites and a potential intermodal terminal within close proximity of Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport.

- ⦿ Work with the Logistics Alliance of Greater Springfield to:
 - ✓ lead outreach efforts to the representatives of FTZ 114 and initiate discussion related to potential sites and companies that stand to benefit from FYZ subzone status
 - ✓ conduct outreach to entities that can benefit from cost savings afforded by FTZ status
 - ✓ review the application processes for subzone and general purpose designation
 - ✓ identify the appropriate grantee/authority for FTZ designation
 - ✓ coordinate the evaluation process with other relevant efforts such as the potential development of an airport industrial park and/or rail-truck intermodal facility
 - ✓ make recommendations regarding the viability and time frame to apply for general purpose FTZ designation if appropriate and if subzone status is not pursued

ACTION 1.6: Pursue emerging opportunities in Economic Activity Centers (EACs) identified in the Economic Corridor and Freight Study commissioned by the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC).

The Economic Corridor and Freight Study conducted by Hanson Professional Services for the SSCRPC in August, 2010 identified potential barriers to development and redevelopment in eight EACs and Key Corridors while also recommending specific actions to overcome certain barriers. Every effort should be made to investigate the opportunities identified in this study and coordinate with appropriate partners to facilitate the implementation of appropriate recommendations. This process of investigation should include but is not limited to the following opportunities in the following EACs:

- ⦿ **West Wabash**
 - ✓ Evaluate opportunities to provide rail service access points leveraging nearby, unused Norfolk Southern rail lines

- ✓ Determine if rail service is feasible in conjunction with existing businesses and rail carriers in and around the EAC
- ✓ Identify those sites within the EAC that could be used for light industrial or distribution purposes that are most compatible with existing and surrounding uses in the EAC

◎ **South Veterans Parkway in vicinity of Wabash**

- ✓ Evaluate opportunities to provide rail service access points leveraging nearby, unused Norfolk Southern rail lines
- ✓ Determine if rail service is feasible in conjunction with existing businesses and rail carriers in and around the EAC
- ✓ Work with existing freight businesses to determine if rail service could potentially support the expansion of operations
- ✓ Identify priority means to improve east-west connectivity and traffic flow within the EAC

◎ **MacArthur Boulevard Junction with I-72**

- ✓ Identify those sites within the EAC that could be used for light industrial or distribution purposes that are most compatible with - and mitigate impacts on - existing and surrounding uses in the EAC (primarily residential and retail)
- ✓ Evaluate the viability and potential future demand for additional rail sidings or spurs from the three Class I rail lines running through or near the EAC

Objective 2: Develop new opportunities in the Mid-Illinois Medical District.

ACTION 2.1: Support the District Commission's ongoing efforts to design, create, and install signage at key entrances and along key corridors within the District to improve branding and image.

- ◎ If necessary, help connect the District Commission with local providers of design and construction services to support the installation of signage that is consistent with the District's existing graphical brand identity.
- ◎ If appropriate and necessary, leverage tax increment financing (TIF) revenues for signage development and installation.
- ◎ Connect signage installation at key entrances with targeted corridor beautification efforts to enhance the aesthetic appeal of entrances to the District (see ACTION 12.2).

ACTION 2.2: Evaluate the need to consolidate, expand, or redefine the boundaries of existing tax increment financing (TIF) districts to best support focused investments in Medical District development.

- ⦿ Work with city officials to evaluate the long-term needs of each existing TIF district and to determine the best mechanisms to catalyze near-term improvements and support long-term development in the Medical District.

ACTION 2.3: Support the development of the Springfield-area Health Information Exchange (HIE).

- ⦿ Advance the formalization of the consortium of providers that will participate in the HIE.
- ⦿ Support all implementation efforts with the Illinois Health Information Exchange Authority and evaluate long-term opportunities to interface with the networks of providers developing similar exchanges in neighboring metropolitan areas.
- ⦿ Seek available federal and state funding to support the technological requirements necessary to facilitate the exchange of information and implement plans funded by the state HIE grant program.
- ⦿ Consider establishing a collaborative SIU-UIS Center for Health Information Management and/or other innovative ways to engage students and faculty in the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) Department of Management Information Systems (MIS) in the development of the HIE. Work with UIS administrators and HIE consortium members to evaluate opportunities to provide graduate students and faculty with first-hand experience in the theoretical and technical development, maintenance, and support of electronic medical records (EMRs) and HIEs.

ACTION 2.4: Develop a public-private research facility in collaboration with the SIU School of Medicine to support the expansion of collaborative, public-private research endeavors in biomedical, medical technology, health information, pharmaceutical, and other related fields.

- ⦿ Facilitate initial, exploratory discussions with SIU, the City of Springfield, the Mid-Illinois Medical District, and other relevant partners at the state and local levels to discuss the viability of such a project.
- ⦿ Work with SIU to evaluate the institution's long-term strategic plan as it relates to research activity and growth. Utilize these discussions to inform the appropriate scale and scope of such a research facility.
- ⦿ Study best practice developments from around the country to assist with planning.
- ⦿ Identify properties, sites, and opportunities for reuse/redevelopment in the Medical District to house such a facility, consistent with the District's master plan.

- Evaluate the demand for and viability of developing an accelerator or incubator as an anchor tenant that provides specialized services to medical-related startups.
- Reach out to existing corporate partners/sponsors of ongoing research endeavors at the SIU School of Medicine to explore private funding and research expansion opportunities.

BEST PRACTICE: IDEA COMMONS & THE JORDAN VALLEY INNOVATION CENTER (SPRINGFIELD, MO)

IDEA Commons is a roughly 90 acre district in Downtown Springfield, Missouri that is the product of a collaborative between the City of Springfield, the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Missouri State University (MSU), and many other partners. IDEA Commons first began in 2004 when MSU purchased the former Missouri Farmers Association (MFA) milling facility from the City of Springfield for one dollar, with plans to transform the brownfield into the Jordan Valley Innovation Center (JVIC). In 2008, MSU developed a larger vision of a Downtown research park - IDEA Commons - that would redevelop and reenergize the surrounding area.

The Jordan Valley Innovation Center, home to five separate buildings covering nearly 75,000 square feet, opened its doors in May 2007. The Center is a public-private endeavor supporting applied research in nanotechnology, bio-materials, genomics, bio-systems, software engineering, and medical instrumentation, among other areas of R&D. However, JVIC is not simply a research center. The facility was also designed to support the instructional needs of MSU. The University has created an interdisciplinary approach integrating hands-on instruction throughout the research and development process. All research efforts are collaborative projects between MSU faculty and private or federal entities that provide funding for most endeavors. Corporate partners include Mercy St. Johns, GlaxoSmithKline, Merck, Lockheed Martin, and numerous other small to medium-sized corporations.

Springfield Innovation, Inc. was formed during the development of the Jordan Valley Innovation Center and established as one of the state-sponsored, non-profit innovation centers in Missouri. These centers are tasked with providing entrepreneurship assistance that specifically seeks to bring new technologies to the marketplace. Springfield Innovation, Inc. supports the educational and research mission of Missouri State University and serves as coordinating entity between other service providers, technology transfer offices, and economic development entities in the region.

Source: Jordan Valley Innovation Center; Missouri State University; IDEA Commons



MFA Milling Facility (BEFORE)



Jordan Valley Innovation Center (AFTER)

ACTION 2.5: Develop a collaborative Destination Healthcare (often referred to as “medical tourism”) Marketing Strategy for highly-specialized and competitive health services offered by Sangamon County’s largest health care providers.

- ⦿ Work with the County’s key providers to identify those specializations (such as cancer treatment or cardiology) in which the region’s providers can best compete on the basis of quality, cost, and access with other major health care providers in surrounding metropolitan areas and states. Identify one to three specializations that differentiate each major provider from their competition.
- ⦿ Develop a strategy to market the specializations through targeted outreach using digital and print media. Tactfully feature the region’s values, amenities, and recreational assets that can enhance the region’s ability to attract patients from surrounding metropolitan areas and states.
- ⦿ Customize websites to feature the identified specializations and ensure that information is accessible to potential patients in multiple languages.

Objective 3: Support tourism growth and the development of new tourism product.

ACTION 3.1: Develop collaborative programs between the GSCC and the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB) that increase the effectiveness of destination marketing.

- ⦿ Develop a system to **formalize communications** between staff the GSCC and SCVB. Staff at the GSCC should make an effort to be informed of all upcoming events, including but not limited to trade shows, conventions, and association meetings. The establishment on monthly “business briefings” would help ensure that GSCC staff is well informed of all upcoming business secured and supported by the SCVB. These “briefings” will also help the GSCC and SCVB identify ways in which the GSCC can best support specific events to increase economic impact if relevant and necessary.
- ⦿ Work with representatives from the SCVB to identify ways in which the GSCC can support the expansion of **data collection and research efforts** to improve understanding of tourism and travel sector trends in Sangamon County. This may include but is not limited to:
 - ✓ economic impact analyses
 - ✓ custom data collection program in partnership with hotels and key attractions
 - ✓ development and deployment of visitor satisfaction surveys
 - ✓ benchmarking against competing metropolitan areas with large heritage and educational tourism sectors
- ⦿ Partner with the SCVB to **integrate key attractions and hotels into the GSCC’s business retention and expansion (BRE) outreach program.**

- ✓ Gauge the interest and willingness of the SCVB to partner with the GSCC in a collaborative outreach program to identify the key challenges facing major tourism attractions and hotels in the region.
- ✓ Develop a customized questionnaire to use on site-visits to major tourism assets and a web-based survey to deploy to all hotels in the region asking similar questions as those asked by the GSCC's existing business team in their outreach efforts. Evaluate the Synchronist Convention, Tourism, Retail, and Service Economy (CRTS) package to determine if it would be a worthwhile investment to support and manage outreach efforts.
- ✓ Utilize gathered information to inform and improve existing and potential future strategic actions of the SCVB and GSCC in support of the travel and tourism sectors.
- ⦿ Identify ways to best **align marketing efforts** and **integrate tourism branding** into overall regional economic development marketing efforts. Coordinate efforts with those referenced in ACTION 3.3.

ACTION 3.2: Work with the Springfield African American History Foundation (SAHHF) to develop a comprehensive, multi-project effort to increase resident and tourist access to educational opportunities related to African American history in Greater Springfield.

- ⦿ Support existing efforts by the SAHHF to continue to collect, transcribe, and publicize oral histories.
- ⦿ Work with SAHHF to develop a committee tasked with the development of a revitalization plan and the identification of public, private, and non-profit sources of funding to advance restoration of the Lincoln Colored Home.
- ⦿ Develop an aggressive proposal and campaign to recruit and support the establishment of a National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) History Museum/Center for Education in Springfield. The Springfield race riots of 1908 directly led to the establishment of the NAACP in 1910. Having just celebrated its centennial anniversary, the NAACP may be interested in making a considerable investment in the community that shaped its mission and sparked its existence.
 - ✓ Engage a large, diverse, and influential group from across Greater Springfield and the state of Illinois to discuss the viability and potential impact of soliciting and securing an NAACP commitment to develop a museum/center for education. The museum/center would seek to educate visitors on the history of the NAACP (including the role of the Springfield race riots in the establishment of the NAACP) and the NAACP's influence on the evolution of the civil rights movement. The

museum/center could serve multiple purposes and uses, from education to advocacy to meeting space.

- ✓ Work with state and local government leadership to solicit financial and non-financial commitments that could help incentivize the development.
- ✓ Evaluate available properties for development or redevelopment in Downtown Springfield and East Springfield that are around the various sites of historical significance to the Springfield race riots.
- ✓ Develop an engaging and unique proposal/pitch that incorporates a wide variety of media and site visits.
- ✓ Invite key NAACP leadership to Springfield to hear the state and the region's collaborative pitch to support a transformational investment in a community with a history that sparked the establishment of the NAACP.

ACTION 3.3: Develop new events, tourism product, and marketing opportunities that solidify the “Land of Lincoln” brand.

- ⦿ Work with the SCVB to identify ways to support continued development and marketing of Sangamon County as the “heart” of the Lincoln National Heritage Area, and ways to best integrate the region’s “Land of Lincoln” brand into comprehensive, regional economic development marketing efforts (see ACTION 3.1).
- ⦿ Hold exploratory discussions with the SCVB, managers of existing Lincoln-related attractions, and other community partners to brainstorm a variety of ways in which the region can continually enhance and tie into the state and region’s “Land of Lincoln” brand.
- ⦿ Consider a wide variety of events and attractions that could supplement the region’s attractiveness to travelers and tourists seeking Lincoln-related experiences. Potential opportunities include but are not limited to the following opportunities:
 - ✓ A Lincoln White House Museum/Art Gallery to include paintings, sculptures, furniture, fixtures, and other works of art from the Lincoln White House, in collaboration with and/or on rotational loan from White House Office of the Curator, the White House Historical Association, and other relevant institutions (such as the Smithsonian).
 - ✓ Public park with a smaller replica of the Lincoln Memorial or Lincoln Statute accompanied by a small reflecting pool, replicating the experience and significance of the memorial site in Washington, D.C., including but not limited to the delivery of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech.
 - ✓ Expansion of “History Comes Alive” to a year-round living history program.

ACTION 3.4: Establish a Tourism Academy in partnership with the SCVB to educate hoteliers and key partners supporting the travel and tourism sector.

- ⦿ Work with the SCVB to develop a half-day curriculum educating staff at hotels, museums, recreational venues, meeting spaces, and other key attractions about the region's full spectrum of tourism assets. Ensure that curriculum encompasses various promotions as well as existing and potential partnerships between tourism assets in the region.
- ⦿ Integrate existing educational initiatives, including but not limited to the SCVB Hospitality Partners, Illinois Office of Tourism Roadshow, Central Illinois Tourism Development Office workshops, and other relevant instructional programs under the umbrella of the "Tourism Academy."
- ⦿ Consider utilizing the Academy in the formation of a trained team of Downtown Ambassadors comprised of part-time employees and volunteers that serve as guides and community ambassadors on the streets of Downtown Springfield during major events.

BEST PRACTICE: DISCOVER DEKALB!, DEKALB CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU (DEKALB COUNTY, GA)

DeKalb County, Georgia - located in the heart of the Atlanta Metropolitan Area - is home to a wide variety of assets including Stone Mountain Park, the Fernbank Museum of Natural History, the shops and dining of Downtown Decatur, and many others. However, DeKalb's tourism assets are often overshadowed by those located in neighboring Fulton County, home to the City of Atlanta. Further, DeKalb County's tourism assets span a variety of interests that are geographically dispersed across the county, as opposed to the highly-concentrated tourist attractions in nearby Downtown Atlanta.

In response, the DeKalb Convention and Visitors Bureau (DCVB) initiated the "Discover DeKalb!" Tourism Academy in 1999 as a tourism certification program to educate hospitality employees about the County's assets. The three-part course offers a wealth of resources for hospitality employees, meeting planners, real estate agents, newcomers/residents of DeKalb County and anyone who enjoys being a tour guide for visitors. All the classes are presented by speakers who are veterans of the hospitality industry. Classes include: Customer Service Training, Motivation Workshop, Sales Techniques Seminar, and the DeKalb Assets Class. The academy also offers a familiarization (FAM) tour of DeKalb County.

Source: DeKalb Convention and Visitors Bureau

Objective 4: Support innovation, entrepreneurship, and small business growth by developing comprehensive and coordinated support services and alternative financing mechanisms.

ACTION 4.1: Develop a non-profit business incubator to support service sector startups in Downtown Springfield and consider other innovative and alternative models for incubation facilities to support entrepreneurship in Greater Springfield.

- Evaluate a variety of operational models and funding sources to support the development and maintenance of a business incubator focused primarily on support for service sector startups. Preference should be given to models that mitigate the startup and maintenance costs of the incubator while simultaneously meeting the needs of prospective tenants. Many service-sector incubators across the country have achieved this objective by providing partially-subsidized rent for office space as opposed to fully-subsidized rent, which is more common in technology incubators.
- Develop a program of services to be offered at the incubator in cooperation with other providers of small business support services throughout the region. Ensure that services are complementary and not competitive with existing services offered throughout the region, and focus on the specific needs of service sector startups. Consider co-locating incubation facilities near existing and complementary support services for small business in the Downtown area.
- Examine other innovative approaches to incubation and startup development that could be adopted in Greater Springfield. This process could include but is not limited to evaluation of the following models:
 - ✓ Virtual incubation services
 - ✓ Development of incubation facilities in East Springfield to align with targeted redevelopment strategies
 - ✓ Medical technology incubation housed within the recommended public-private research facility (see ACTION 2.4)
 - ✓ Incubation facilities specifically targeting young entrepreneurs

ACTION 4.2: Evaluate the viability of creating a “Business Services Hub” in Downtown Springfield.

The GSCC and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) were previously co-located in facilities at the Old State Capital Plaza. SBDC offices remain, but GSCC offices have relocated. As the region attempts to create a more comprehensive small business and entrepreneurship assistance program, the co-location of these two organizations, along with other, new efforts referenced in this Objective could help create a more seamless and coordinated approach to the delivery of these services.

- Evaluate the spatial requirements of the GSCC, the SBDC, and new incubation facilities (see ACTION 4.1) and work with partners to determine if co-location is a financially viable for all parties.

- If viable, identify space that can support efficient operations of the GSCC, SBDC, and the service sector incubator that is visible at street level and easily accessible. If viable, acquire space, relocate offices, and aggressively publicize the new facilities to the entire business community.
- Develop a plan that identifies lead entities and establishes protocols for the administration, provision, and maintenance of existing support services as well as those new services outlined in this Objective.
- Reach out to other entities providing small business support services such as the Springfield Chapter of SCORE and the Illinois District Office of the Small Business Administration to evaluate opportunities for improved coordination and potential presence at the Downtown Business Services Hub.

ACTION 4.3: Expand the influence and presence of the GSCC's Small Business Network by increasing networking and educational opportunities for entrepreneurs and small business owners in the community.

- Provide input to local and regional economic development partners on a bi-annual basis. Input should encompass public policy, challenges facing entrepreneurs, overall business climate concerns, and recommendations for enhancing support services throughout the region.
- Coordinate events that celebrate small business success stories, including Small Business of the Month awards. Every effort should be made to publicize success stories and award winners, and encourage residents and businesses to support local entrepreneurs.
- Develop and host a government contracting and procurement educational series to increase small business awareness of and familiarity with state and local government procedures and opportunities. Invite departmental representatives and procurement officers to facilitate these educational events and ensure that planning and programming is coordinated with the Illinois Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC).
- Expand the GSCC's Chamber University programming to include collaborative educational seminars with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) that are specifically targeted at entrepreneurs and new small business owners.

ACTION 4.4: Continue to expand the collaborative micro loan program supported by the Springfield Project, the GSCC, the Springfield Black Chamber, and Illinois Ventures for Community Action.

- Infuse additional capital sufficient to double the annual number of loans issued to eligible applicants between 2010 and 2015.
- Expand resource support to loan recipients including:

- ✓ Maintenance of SBDC membership and educational requirements
- ✓ Membership and participation in the recommended Small Business Committee
- ✓ Access to SCORE mentorship
- ✓ Provision of free financial management software licenses
- ✓ Provision of free advertising space in Chamber publications

ACTION 4.5: Significantly expand the Project Innovation contest and aggressively market Project Innovation to targeted audiences outside Sangamon County.

- ⦿ Consider establishing separate contests for:
 - ✓ Entrepreneurs currently based in Sangamon County (Project Innovation)
 - ✓ Entrepreneurs based outside Sangamon County (Project Innovation Relocation)
- ⦿ Develop alternative guidelines for Project Innovation Relocation that provides contest winners with greater flexibility in terms of timing requirements for business relocations.
- ⦿ Infuse additional capital sufficient to not only double the scope of the contest, but to also provide sufficient incentive for business and family relocation. Evaluate a variety of investment strategies among the Project's existing partners to raise award amounts.

ACTION 4.6: Continue to pursue the formation of a Sangamon County Angel Network.

- ⦿ Assess the existing shortage of alternative local forms of financing, the types of startups in need of financing, and the potential return on investment from best practice angel investor networks around the country.
- ⦿ Utilize resources provided by the Angel Capital Education Foundation to study national best practices and tools for recruiting investors.
- ⦿ Collaborate with regional economic development partners to develop key messaging to be used in the recruitment of potential angel investors. Conduct aggressive outreach to high net worth individuals with ties to Greater Springfield to gauge their interest in starting and supporting an Angel Investor Network to exclusively support startup ventures in Greater Springfield.
- ⦿ Provide assistance as necessary and appropriate in establishing the Network as a 501 (c)(3) corporation, developing bylaws, establishing a board of directors, and marketing the Network.

Objective 5: Effectively promote the region’s assets to external audiences through targeted marketing and public relations efforts.

ACTION 5.1: Update and expand the GSCC-operated “Springfield in the Middle” website and transfer all web-based content related the Quantum Growth Partnership and the GSCC to a single, centralized site promoting economic development in the region.

- Transfer all content from existing GSCC and Q5 website (www.gsc.org) to the Springfield in the Middle (www.springfieldinthemiddle.com) website, adopting the design elements of the latter. Merge content in a sensible manner consistent with best practice websites from Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations around the country.
- Refocus the content of the “Springfield in the Middle” website more broadly on economic development than specifically targeting manufacturing and logistics operations. Incorporate individual web pages devoted to each of the region’s targeted clusters of economic activity: Financial and Professional Services; Advanced Medical Care; Tourism; and Logistics.
- Incorporate relevant information for various targeted audiences in both digital and downloadable (PDF) format: including but not limited to economic, demographic, and workforce profiles; target cluster profiles; tax, incentive, and business costs information; available sites and buildings; physical and infrastructural assets; quality of life assets; etc.
- Ensure that the new website incorporates dynamic and interactive tools (i.e. flash animations, videos, blogs, etc.).
- Incorporate content (news articles, testimonials, links, data, etc.) that is consistent with competitive best practice

BEST PRACTICE: WEBSITE, METRO DENVER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP. (DENVER, CO)

An affiliate of the Denver Metro Chamber, the EDC is a public-private organization charged with regional leadership, job creation, and marketing activities related to economic development. Launched in 2004, Metro Denver EDC’s website was designed based on comprehensive input from top site selection consultants. Data needed by site selectors, business leaders, and investors to make critical decisions were included in the easy-to-navigate website. In addition to providing a compressive online data center (including downloadable information on the local workforce, population, economy, taxes, incentives, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and quality of life), the Metro Denver EDC website has some unique features. These include:

- ✓ Commentary on the Denver and U.S. economy by a top Denver-based economist.
- ✓ Business leader profiles, which rotate to highlight the region’s most prominent CEOs, presidents, and managers and quotations noting why they consider Metro Denver to be a competitive place for business.
- ✓ Interactive GIS mapping of office, industrial, and retail buildings and vacant properties.
- ✓ Searchable company database that allows users to find regional businesses by name, business sector, city, county, or zip code.

Source: Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation

websites from across the country.

- Utilize paid-search and search engine optimization (SEO) to increase traffic to the new website.
- Incorporate interactive elements that allow users to customize their experience: potentially including searchable directories of business in the region; searchable web-based mapping of available sites and buildings; customized data retrieval supported by a frequently updated database of relevant indicators.

ACTION 5.2: Coordinate and host a reverse trade mission in Sangamon County.

- Organize a reverse trade mission with key partners in the state (Governor’s Office, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, World Trade Center Illinois) that brings foreign trade commissioners from Chicago to promote the County’s infrastructural advantages, available sites, workforce development partners, and other attractive attributes of the community.
- Ensure that other critical investments outlined in this *Strategy* that are supportive of the region’s logistics and manufacturing infrastructure are in progress (or in some cases, completed) prior to coordinating the trade mission in order to maximize the attractiveness of the region’s assets.
- Work with local industry and utilities, as well as other key partners in government, education, and the private sector, to program and participate in the mission.

BEST PRACTICE: BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL REVERSE TRADE MISSION (BLOOMINGTON, IL)

In order to help boost direct foreign investment in central Illinois, former Governor Rod Blagojevich’s Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity arranged for a “reverse trade mission” in Bloomington-Normal, located two-and-a-half hours southwest of Chicago. A team from the Governor’s office escorted 24 Chicago-based foreign trade commissioners to the region in order to promote central Illinois to the commissioners and to encourage them to promote the region to colleagues overseas. Twenty-one countries were represented by the delegation including Canada, China, France, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Korea, Spain, Taiwan, and Thailand.

Trade commissioners, community leaders, and over 100 members of the local business community participated in tours of the City of Bloomington, the City of Normal, and Illinois State University (ISU). In addition, they heard presentations from leaders at Mitsubishi Motors (a large local employer), ISU’s Dean of the College of Business, and the mayors of Bloomington and Normal. Each trade commissioner was given a travel bag filled with unique marketing materials and in-depth information pertaining to the economic competitiveness of Bloomington-Normal.

Source: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

ACTION 5.3: Conduct a targeted public relations campaign to promote positive aspects of life and business in Greater Springfield.

- Consider retaining a seasoned public relations (PR) individual with extensive media contacts and experience in news flow management to promote the region's competitive position, quality of life assets, and newsworthy developments.
 - ✓ Coordinate all public relations efforts with local, regional, and state partners to share costs, improve messaging, and increase impact.
 - ✓ Work with partners and the retained PR individual to identify the appropriate geographic markets, publications, and alternative media outlets to target.
 - ✓ Consistently provide the public relations firm with ideas and newsworthy developments.
- Conduct one or more targeted journalist tours aligned with the region's target cluster. Such tours would invite key journalists from major national news outlets and targeted industry publications to visit Sangamon County for a familiarization tour of the region's assets related to a specific theme or target cluster to expose journalists and their readership to the region and promote positive impressions.

ACTION 5.4: Target and attract conventions, trade shows, and corporate meetings that align with the region's target clusters and expose targeted audiences to the region's assets relevant to their business.

- Work with the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB), the Prairie Capital Convention Center, hoteliers, and other key partners to inform management and sales teams soliciting convention and trade show business about the region's target clusters.
- Work with these partners to identify specific professional associations, trade shows, conventions, and other meetings or events that align with the region's target clusters. Examples: the Association of Meeting Professionals (aligned with the region's Tourism cluster); the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (aligned with the region's Advanced Medical Care cluster).
- Develop targeted strategies and marketing materials to aid the recruitment of conventions, trade shows, and corporate meetings that align with the region's target clusters.
- Plan a variety of educational and familiarization opportunities to expose convention and trade show attendees to the region's assets related to their business.

ACTION 5.5: Work with key economic development partners in neighboring metropolitan areas, particular the Bloomington-Normal metropolitan area, to develop a collaborative effort that supports the expansion of finance and insurance sectors throughout the larger Central Illinois region.

- ⦿ Develop a working group inclusive of economic and workforce development professionals throughout Central Illinois, as well as key private sector leaders in the finance and insurance fields.
- ⦿ Task the working group with the development of collaborative marketing plans to promote Central Illinois as an attractive destination for finance, insurance, and supportive professional service functions. Consider the following options as components of the Central Illinois “multi-metro” marketing effort:
 - ✓ Multi-metro finance and insurance branding campaign
 - ✓ Joint attendance/exhibits at key trade shows and conventions
 - ✓ Joint advertising in high-value trade publications
- ⦿ With adequate progress on collaborative marketing efforts, consider longer-term collaborative efforts that support the multi-metro cluster, including but not limited to:
 - ✓ collaborative development of legislative agenda related to issues affecting the finance and insurance sectors
 - ✓ formalized partnerships between public institutions of higher education to improve student access to finance, business administration, and other relevant programs that support the finance and insurance sectors in Central Illinois

Objective 6: Expand the region’s collaborative existing business retention and expansion (BRE) outreach efforts to improve understanding of and response to key business concerns in Greater Springfield.

ACTION 6.1: Expand the current business retention and expansion outreach program at the GSCC to include web-based surveys in addition to existing on-site visits by GSCC staff.

- ⦿ Develop a web-based survey that collects information on business hiring plans, workforce needs, and barriers to expansion among other items, consistent with the GSCC’s existing, site-based business outreach efforts.
- ⦿ Formalize an early warning system based on information collected at site visits and from web-based surveys that is sufficient to identify firms at-risk of contraction or closure and ways in which community, economic, and workforce development partners can help employers reduce barriers to competitiveness.

- ⦿ When possible and relevant, coordinate site visits with other key partners in the region, including Ameren, CWLP, and the Springfield Employment and Training Center (SETC) to maximize cooperation and responsiveness.
- ⦿ Formalize follow-up protocols with key partners as necessary.

ACTION 6.2: Develop a research program that informs external audiences and supports the development of internal expertise in target clusters.

- ⦿ Leverage GSCC business contacts and relevant higher education partners to develop a comprehensive inventory of literature on key trends in sectors within the region's target clusters.
- ⦿ Maintain a database of news articles, industry literature, and market research related to target clusters.
- ⦿ Support professional development and networking opportunities for staff and partners engaged in marketing, recruitment, and business development efforts.
- ⦿ Develop a database of key indicators relevant to the development and maturation of target clusters in Sangamon County.

ACTION 6.3: Conduct supply chain mapping in partnership with existing businesses to identify potential relocation prospects.

- ⦿ Work with medium to large employers (greater than 50 employees) to map supply-chains and identify potential recruitment targets that could benefit from co-location near existing businesses in the region.
- ⦿ Fully review and assess identified prospects' corporate dynamics, competitive needs and relocation history.
- ⦿ Conduct aggressive outreach in collaboration with existing firms and relevant state and local partners to potential relocation prospects identified by existing firms and their supply chains.
- ⦿ Collaborate with market-leading employers in the region to coordinate site and city tours, inviting suppliers and key members of each employer's supply chain. Leverage existing firms when hosting potential prospects with supply-chain relationships including tours of their facilities, demonstrations of operational processes, attendance at dinners and other hosted events, and the identification of efficiencies gained from relocation.

ACTION 6.4: Create a “Source from Sangamon” challenge to all businesses in Sangamon County to identify local alternatives and switch from at least one external (outside the County) supplier to one internal (inside the County) supplier.

- Utilize existing Chamber membership databases and other business directories to create a comprehensive, searchable database of all businesses in the region, including descriptions of core competencies, services, and products. Encourage businesses to submit information. Publish the database online.
- Develop a variety of incentives, including but not limited to GSCC membership fee and/or advertising discounts, for participation in the challenge. Engage other community partners to gauge their willingness to provide other financial or non-financial incentives to participating businesses.
- Conduct an aggressive marketing and public relations effort to publicize the challenge, encourage participation, and communicate potential economic impact. Convey that local-sourcing can be as simple as switching providers of paper products at a local restaurant to as large as switching payroll service providers to a major employer.
- Coordinate the timing of the “Source from Sangamon” challenge with other major business networking events in the region, including but not limited to the Business Connections trade show, the Corporate Cup Challenge, and other similar events.
- Ensure that GSCC staff is available to support businesses in the process of identifying local alternatives and facilitating dialogue and relationship development between businesses. Ensure that GSCC staff is available to collect information on the estimated level of expenditures transferred to local businesses from local-sourcing initiatives, and track the economic impact of the “Source from Sangamon” challenge.

Objective 7: Advocate for public policies that support economic diversification, workforce sustainability, and community attachment and inclusion.

ACTION 7.1: Continue to advocate for initiatives and policies where progress has been made in recent years.

- Rail Relocation: Raise awareness by continuing to educate residents, businesses, and policymakers regarding the potential adverse impact that rail expansion along the Third St. corridor would have on the economic development of Greater Springfield.
- Tenth Street Corridor Redevelopment: Advance communitywide discussions, support formal planning efforts, and help secure financial commitments to support the mitigation of adverse rail relocation impacts and enhance economic opportunities for businesses and residents along the Tenth St. corridor.

- Land Subdivision Ordinance: Continue to work with the development community and city officials to revise the Land Subdivision Ordinance to address specific, burdensome requirements and improve the development review process.
- Developer's Agreement: Continue to seek revisions to the agreement and the costs imposed on developers for supporting road infrastructure development costs.
- Comprehensive Land Use Plan: Support the expedient completion of a Regional Comprehensive Plan, including updated land use planning, by the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission. Ensure that the planning process is mindful of long-term visions for various critical areas of development including but not limited to the Airport Commerce Park and other potential centers of future economic activity.
- Transportation Funding: Maintain advocacy efforts to ensure that sustainable funding mechanisms are in place for infrastructure development and maintenance, particularly support for major arterial improvements.
- MacArthur Boulevard Redevelopment: Continue to advance implementation of priority recommendations identified in the MacArthur Boulevard Redevelopment Study by supporting the acquisition of necessary funding to carry out key projects in the short- and long-term.

ACTION 7.2: Host quarterly or bi-annual panel forums to discuss and address public policies impacting economic diversification, workforce sustainability, and community attachment and inclusion in Greater Springfield.

- Identify multiple topics of concern to community - ranging from local development policy to education policy and state-level taxation to infrastructure maintenance - to cover in panel forums.
- Identify potential participants and moderators for various topics. Target local and state elected and appointed officials.
- Identify appropriate meeting spaces to accommodate attendance in the hundreds.
- Reach out to the UIS College of Public Administration to gauge their interest in sponsoring and supporting the panel forums in a variety of ways.
- Schedule and publicize forums.

ACTION 7.3: Work with the City of Springfield to create a website that is more user-friendly to the development community.

- Collect examples of best-practice websites from around the country and compile information on desirable features to inform discussion with City officials.

- At present, information relevant to the development community is difficult to find and is spread across a variety of individual web pages. Consider developing a centralized portal to access all relevant information. This includes but is not limited to the following:
 - ✓ City's zoning and existing and future land use maps;
 - ✓ Information on all fees and permits;
 - ✓ Full code of ordinances;
 - ✓ Business license applications and background information to help first-time business owners and developers to navigate the application system.
- Develop a web-based "one stop shop" - potentially positioned within the City website's existing "Action Center" - to include the aforementioned information and other materials relevant to the business and development community.
- Develop a web-based permit-tracking system to streamline and better coordinate the development review process while allowing the development community to track the status of applications online.

WORKFORCE SUSTAINABILITY

Goal: Develop a sustainable workforce that is capable of supporting long-term economic growth.

What: Greater Springfield will continue to support collaborative solutions to challenges that inhibit college matriculation, including the need for remedial education and access to financial aid. It will develop and promote a scholarship program – the Springfield Promise – that guarantees financial aid for high school graduates at one of the region’s public institutions of higher education. The region will invest in programs that help expose college students to career paths in the region’s target clusters and help to establish student relationships with employers in the region. New initiatives will seek to increase the engagement of young professionals in various aspects of the community to support the attraction and retention of this important demographic.

Why: Over the five year period from 2003 to 2008, 1,282 more individuals moved out of Greater Springfield than the number of new residents who relocated to the region. During the same period, neighboring metropolitan areas in Central Illinois have successfully attracted more new residents than the number of residents that they are losing. Quite simply, the region is hemorrhaging existing residents at a rate that exceeds its ability to attract new residents. In addition, the region is home to a relatively older population. The percentage of the population aged 45-64 is considerably larger than the 25-44 cohort that will be replacing this older demographic in the workforce as the Baby Boom generation retires. And furthermore, while the region is home to a relatively well-educated adult population, its residents are not improving their educational attainment levels as fast as the average American community or the state of Illinois, and are thereby losing their competitive edge. Combined, these three trends present a tremendous threat to the sustainability of the region’s workforce.

What if... ...Greater Springfield is unable to produce a sufficient pipeline of workers to replace those that will be retiring in the decades to come? Will the region’s workforce and economic base necessarily shrink? Will the region’s targeted clusters be able to grow if education and training programs are not aligned with the needs of these sectors?

Objective 8: Increase college matriculation, post-secondary degree attainment, and exposure to career pathways.

ACTION 8.1: Maintain support for key organizations and initiatives that have and will continue to drive educational improvement initiatives in Sangamon County.

- ◎ Support the expansion of the **Business/Education Partnership of Sangamon County** and its various programs, including but not limited to:
 - ✓ Promoting the values that increase eligibility and applications for the Focus on Your Future scholarships
 - ✓ Encouraging and increasing participation in the Partners in Education program
- ◎ Reenergize the Action Teams within the **Continuum of Learning**:
 - ✓ Identify new volunteers to serve on Action Teams
 - ✓ Work with volunteer leadership to secure commitments to support relevant initiatives contained within this *Strategy*
 - ✓ Develop new and frequently updated “Action Team Reports” inclusive of annual objectives and actions
 - ✓ Ensure that action team meeting minutes and “progress reports” are regularly posted to the Continuum’s website
- ◎ Advance educational initiatives within the **Promise Neighborhood** in East Springfield:
 - ✓ Continue to study the best practice Harlem Children’s Zone model and identify appropriate initiatives to replicate
 - ✓ Consider developing a familiarization trip composed of key leadership in the public, private, and non-profit sectors to visit with Geoffrey Canada and other leaders of the Harlem Children’s Zone
 - ✓ Develop action timelines and identify funding mechanisms to support implementation

ACTION 8.2: Develop and implement a comprehensive remedial education prevention plan.

- ◎ Task Action Team 3 (Grades 6-12) within the Continuum of Learning with the study and identification of specific factors that are contribute to the need for remedial education in college among graduates of school districts in Sangamon County.
- ◎ Work with public school districts and higher education institutions to develop college readiness assessments for high school students in order to address critical deficiencies while students are still in high school.

- Develop a system to identify students in need of remedial education. Ensure that students are assessed at the end of their sophomore years of high school and again prior to graduation.
- Work with K-12 administrators and the region’s higher educational institutions to develop collaborative summer remedial education programs.

ACTION 8.3: Develop a program that provides hands-on assistance connecting aspiring college students with available forms of financial aid.

- Modeled after national best practices, develop a Financial Aid Saturdays program designed to increase higher education enrollment. Such a program utilizes volunteers to assist families with the process of applying for financial aid.
- Utilize Q5 partners to recruit and train volunteers from the private sector to assist students and their families with the process of applying for financial aid, including hands on application assistance.

BEST PRACTICE: FINANCIAL AID SATURDAYS, GREATER AUSTIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (AUSTIN, TX)

With the support of three local school districts, six higher education institutions, and 12 community organizations and companies, the Greater Austin Chamber worked in the first phase of its “20,010 by 2010” program to boost local higher education enrollment by 30 percent over 48 months. The goal was to grow total regional enrollment in institutions of higher education to 20,010 by 2010.

A component of this effort was a program called Financial Aid Saturdays, in which the Chamber provided support to Austin, Round Rock, and Manor Independent School Districts (ISDs) to increase FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) submission by 15 percent for students graduating in 2007. The Chamber organized and trained volunteers to make calls, answer questions, and walk students and their families through the process of applying for financial aid. In the first phase of the program, the Chamber’s more than 200 volunteers assisted over 500 families in filing FAFSA applications.

Source: Market Street Services and the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce

ACTION 8.4: Establish the Springfield Education Corps in partnership with the Continuum of Learning and the Young Springfield Professionals Network (YSPN).

- Reach out to public school administrators throughout the county to gauge their interest and willingness in participating in a volunteer-supported program that provides after-school tutoring and mentorship to middle and high school students in public schools throughout Sangamon County.

- ⦿ Work with the Continuum and YSPN to develop an aggressive outreach program to secure commitments to a volunteer network of young professionals - the Springfield Education Corps - that are willing to devote a few hours each month to provide tutoring and mentorship in the region's public schools.
- ⦿ Develop an outreach plan to secure corporate sponsorships and corporate commitments allowing employees to leave work early once each month to volunteer their time.
- ⦿ Select one or two schools to serve as pilot programs in the Springfield Education Corps tutoring program.

ACTION 8.5: Develop a Parent University pilot program.

- ⦿ Work with relevant partners including but not limited to the Continuum of Learning and the Business/Education Partnership of Sangamon County to identify those school districts in the region where a lack of parental involvement in child learning is perceived to be a significant barrier to the success of other educational improvement initiatives.
- ⦿ Reach out to administrators in the identified high-priority school districts around the region to gauge their interest and willingness to support and participate in a pilot Parent University program.
- ⦿ Study national best practices and develop a flexible curriculum to include in the initial pilot program. Ensure that pilot courses cover basic topics such as study skills, parent-child communication, standardized test preparation, parent-teacher relationships, after school guidance, and other important subjects.
- ⦿ Consider expanding the existing Parents as Teachers program (for parents of prenatal to three year-old children) to a more comprehensive Parent University in Springfield Public Schools.

BEST PRACTICE: PARENT UNIVERSITY (MESA, AZ)

With the philosophy that parenting is a continuous learning process and that the foundation for a child's education is laid at home, the Mesa Public School system launched a Parent University program in 1985. The diverse offering of sessions and workshops, held in junior high school auditoriums and other local school sites, now boasts attendance rates of 4,000 parents annually. The program is publicized through radio announcements, target fliers, brochures sent home with every student, and announcements in the monthly district newsletter.

Parent University is funded through a small registration fee for participants, grants, partnerships with local nonprofit agencies like Mesa United Way. Scholarships are available for those parents with financial need.

Topics for sessions are relevant, often specifically requested by parents, and led by local and national speakers and experts. The most popular areas of instruction are discipline and communication. Participant feedback concludes each workshop, where parents are asked to identify what they liked about the session, what they learned, what actions they will take, what improvements are needed, and what else they would like to learn about.

Source: Mesa Public Schools

ACTION 8.6: Work with all area higher education institutions to develop strategies for program expansion that align with the region's target clusters.

- Leverage existing research from community partners as well as state and federal employment and occupational data in the determination of priority education and training needs. Leverage research on cluster trends to prioritize new programs and courses for development. Examples of potential programs for long-term development include but are not limited to
 - ✓ Graduate-level finance
 - ✓ Graduate-level microbiology
 - ✓ Graduate-level chemistry
- Work with regional partners to develop a long-term plan to align program development and expansion efforts with the region's target clusters. Provide any necessary assistance in identifying barriers to expand capacity.
- Seek resources from state, federal, corporate, institutional and foundation sources to help fund new and expanded programs. Integrate funding support for institutions and cluster-specific degree programs into legislative priorities and policy agendas supported by Q5, the GSCC, and other community partners.
- Continue to support successful initiatives such as the Central Illinois Nursing Initiative that have proven to have a positive impact on the pipeline of talent supporting the region's target clusters.

ACTION 8.7: Increase the exposure of high school students to career track opportunities through summer internship opportunities at the region's businesses.

- Work with K-12 representatives, postsecondary institutions, and company officials to assess the existing capacity of and participation rate in existing internship programs.
- Leverage regional partners to source ideas for new internship programs and opportunities to expose students to cluster-based occupations. Encourage local firms - especially those within target clusters - to expand paid and unpaid summer internships for high school students.

Objective 9: Develop programs that support the attraction and retention of college graduates and young professionals.

ACTION 9.1: Partner with the Young Springfield Professional Network (YSPN) to greatly expand membership by encouraging employers to sponsor their young (25-44) employees.

- ⦿ Work with YSPN to coordinate an outreach effort to employers in the region to inform them of the YSPN mission and its role in securing a sustainable, professional workforce for Greater Springfield in the decades to come.
- ⦿ Solicit commitments to support the engagement and participation of young employees in YSPN through subsidized membership fees, event sponsorship, and other incentives.
- ⦿ Coordinate outreach efforts with those supporting the establishment of the Springfield Education Corps.
- ⦿ Establish a goal of 1,215 YSPN members by December 2015 (12/15).

ACTION 9.2: Improve YSPN networking opportunities with Chamber membership and Q5 volunteer leadership.

- ⦿ Work with YSPN to identify ways in which the Network's membership can be more engaged with GSCC and Q5 planning and implementation efforts.
- ⦿ Consider designating one or two slots on various GSCC committees, Q5-related initiatives (such as Continuum of Learning Action Teams), and other councils, committees, and boards to be filled by YSPN members or Leadership Springfield students.

ACTION 9.3: Provide young professionals with a vehicle to support specific causes and initiatives of concern to the young professional community in Sangamon County by establishing a Community Affairs Committee within YSPN.

- ⦿ Work with YSPN leadership to develop a new Community Affairs Committee.
- ⦿ Establish a mission and scope for the committee, potentially inclusive of the following actions.
 - ✓ Develop annual work plans that identify specific priority projects and investments throughout the community of importance to young professionals. This includes but is not limited to higher education investments, parks and recreational resources, bicycle and pedestrian friendliness, downtown attractiveness, community aesthetics.
 - ✓ Coordinate three annual events that provide young professionals with an opportunity to communicate directly with:

- State elected officials (Day at the Capital)
- Mayor and City Council (Day at the City)
- County Board (Day at the County)

ACTION 9.4: Develop an internship and job search portal targeting college students and recent graduates.

- ⦿ Develop an internship and job search website that specifically targets college students and recent graduates.
- ⦿ Incorporate information on Greater Springfield designed to showcase the region's quality of life as it appeals to college graduates and young professionals.
- ⦿ Develop a database of human resource (HR) contacts and other individuals responsible for hiring decisions to support outreach efforts.
- ⦿ Encourage employers in Sangamon County to utilize the website as a place to advertise internships and entry-level positions. Organize and conduct a regular outreach effort utilizing the aforementioned HR contacts, GSCC membership, and other business contact databases to regularly remind employers of the portal.
- ⦿ Publicize the website at college campuses throughout Central Illinois.

BEST PRACTICE: GREATER GRADS, GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY CHAMBER (OKLAHOMA CITY, OK)

Greater Grads is an initiative of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's Education and Workforce Development division. Greater Grads launched in 2006 to build Oklahoma City's talent base by connecting Oklahoma graduates - a vital component of the City's future workforce - with employers in the Oklahoma City region. The program consists of three parts:

- ✓ Summer internship program: Interns can be enrolled in this four week series that includes a kick-off session and four lunch sessions that highlight the benefits of living and working in the Oklahoma City region, fosters peer networking and provides resources to help students transition from college to career.
- ✓ Regional Career Fair: The career fair is held each spring with more than 100 recruiters from local companies. A link on the Greater Grads website provides attendees with resume and interviewing tips to maximize their success, and the time of the employers attending the fair.
- ✓ Website for graduates and employers: This website focuses on promoting Oklahoma City to recent college graduates and young professionals and connecting them with jobs available at local businesses.

Source: Greater Grads; Greater Oklahoma City Chamber

ACTION 9.5: Work with UIS to augment the graduate assistantship program to include work for eligible and approved employers throughout the region.

- Augment the existing graduate assistantship program at UIS - which currently provides assistantships based at the University - to include assistantships supported by employers throughout the region.
- In addition to the University's existing Graduate Teaching Assistant, Graduate Research Assistant, Graduate Assistant, and Pre-Professional Graduate Assistant classification, create a fifth class of assistantship - Cooperative Assistants - whereby corporate entities provide the financial and resource support for the assistantship (tuition and fees) in exchange for student support consistent with existing program guidelines (20 hours per week).

ACTION 9.6: Develop a fellowship program modeled after national best practices that provides unique career, community engagement, and leadership opportunities to the best and brightest college graduates from the region.

- Study best practice programs - particularly the yStark! Fellowship Program - to examine ways in which such a program could be adapted to and adopted in Greater Springfield.
- Work with YSPN, private employers, and key community partners to develop a fellowship program that leverages successful elements of other community engagement and leadership initiatives, such as Leadership Springfield.
- Solicit commitments from regional employers, develop an application and screening process, and begin publicizing the program.

BEST PRACTICE: YSTARK! FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM (STARK COUNTY, OHIO)

ystark! is the Canton, Ohio region's young professional group, committed to improving their community through knowledge, leadership and participation. Their main goal is to help develop a young, involved and educated workforce for area businesses.

One of ystark!'s most progressive and unusual initiatives is their ystark! Fellowship Program, which attempts to retain Stark County's best college and university graduates through an organized training program that promotes the leadership qualities of its participants and roots them in the region.

The fellowship program represents an opportunity for leading undergraduate students searching for their first salaried, full-time position following graduation. Local companies can utilize this fantastic recruiting tool to tap into and help foster emerging talent. Participants are provided with a total immersion experience: work, social, community activities and service, and leadership training.

Through the training and retention fellowship participants receive, initiatives like the ystark! Fellowship Program help to fill the gaps between the young professional generation and the established leadership groups and executives in the community.

Source: ystark! - Young Professionals Engaged in Stark County

ACTION 9.7: Develop web-based surveys to be deployed to high school students, college students, and young professionals to gather resident feedback on the community and its attractiveness to each of these three groups.

- Develop surveys in partnership with YSPN leadership. Solicit feedback on the attractiveness of the place, the appeal of the community’s amenities, the likelihood that they will continue to reside in the community, the types of changes in the community that would increase their likelihood to remain residents, and other questions that can help inform talent retention and recruitment efforts.
- Work with administrators from the region’s public and private high schools, colleges, and universities to educate them on the effort and identify ways in which to conduct outreach to students to ensure maximum participation. Offer to include specific questions that each entity would be interested in researching and commit to sharing results in order to provide incentive for participation by various institutions.
- Work with employers to publicize surveys through the workplace and encourage participation by asking employees to take a few minutes out of their day to complete surveys.
- Utilize the information to inform the development of future strategic efforts related to talent retention and attraction.

ACTION 9.8: Coordinate and host an annual homecoming event for former high school students, college students, and residents of Greater Springfield.

- Partner with YSPN, SCVB, public and private high schools, colleges, and universities to develop a list of expatriates and alumni currently residing outside Greater Springfield.
- Develop and program a community-wide homecoming event spanning one weekend each year, coordinated other alumni/homecoming events. Showcase exciting new developments and investments across the community.
- Coordinate the homecoming event with other celebrations and large entertainment events, as well as other events such as career fairs that increase exposure to career opportunities in the region.

BEST PRACTICE: GET DOWN! TOWN, SYNERG, ACTION GREENSBORO (GREENSBORO, NC)

Action Greensboro’s young talent initiative - “SynerG” - has a variety of programs directed toward young professionals. One of the many events that SynerG coordinates is an annual college student homecoming event (called “Get Down! Town”). The free event includes live entertainment, giveaways, and discounts at downtown restaurants and retail stores. The occasion serves as an opportunity to showcase what Greensboro has to offer, to entice former residents and students back to the area. The event attracts a wide range of sponsors in addition to SynerG and Action Greensboro, including local employers, colleges and universities, radio and television stations, utility providers, the City of Greensboro, and the Greensboro Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Source: SynerG; Action Greensboro

[[COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT AND INCLUSION]]

Goal: **Develop community character and quality of place that is attractive and inviting to diverse populations.**

What: Greater Springfield will invest in a wide variety of programs that increase exposure to and attractiveness of properties in Downtown Springfield, while supporting efforts that increase resident patronage of Downtown establishments. Investments that create a more student-friendly environment around Lincoln Land Community College and the University of Illinois at Springfield will be accompanied by focused efforts to better integrate the region's colleges and universities into the overall community fabric. The region's leadership will remain committed to promoting diversity and inclusivity throughout the community. Investments in community beautification will improve the attractiveness of specific neighborhoods and help elevate resident pride.

Why: Greater Springfield is an attractive place to live for many, but many others have expressed doubts that they and their children will continue to reside in the region. Reasons for this lack of attachment vary, but many cited the lack of a vibrant downtown, the lack of an appealing atmosphere for college students, the erosion of the community's aesthetic character, and permeating divisiveness between racially and ethnically diverse populations. A recent poll conducted by Gallup and the Knight Foundation of more than 15,000 individuals in 26 distinct communities indicated that a community's social offerings, openness, and aesthetics are the three most important factors in determining residents' satisfaction with and attachment to their community. These three factors were perceived to be important than a number of other factors commonly perceived to be critical to resident satisfaction, including basic services and economic conditions, including the availability of jobs. If the region does not continue to support investments that encourage resident attachment and inclusivity, Greater Springfield will have a difficult time achieving the other goals of this strategy: Economic Diversification and Workforce Sustainability.

What if... ...existing residents lack pride in their community? Will they speak highly of the region? What will they tell their friends, their extended families, and their colleagues living outside the community? Will potential future residents have a strong first impression of Greater Springfield? Will high school graduates from across the country be attracted to a community that lacks a strong college town atmosphere? Can Greater Springfield compete for college graduates and young professionals – members of a generation that increasingly choose a place to live before choosing a place to work?

Objective 10: Develop a vibrant Downtown Springfield that is an attractive place to live, work, and play.

ACTION 10.1: Evaluate the viability of increasing UIS student presence in Downtown Springfield through course offerings and residential housing.

- ☉ Work with UIS administrators to evaluate the viability of developing specific opportunities to increase student presence in Downtown Springfield, including but not limited to:

 - ✓ Medical-focused course offerings located within proximity of the instructional and institutional resources in Medical District: could potentially offer biology, public health, and/or clinical laboratory science courses and/or full programs within the Medical District; long-term options could include accompanying residential living space and collaborative educational opportunities between UIS, SIU, and major healthcare providers.
 - ✓ Residential living opportunities for public policy interns: could potentially develop student housing for legislative interns; long-term options could include course offerings downtown from the College of Public Affairs and Administration, and collaborative educational opportunities between UIS, state government, and local government through strategic location/proximity.

BEST PRACTICE: RIVERPARK CAMPUS, COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY (COLUMBUS, GA)

Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia is home to nearly 7,000 undergraduate students. The University's main campus is located roughly six miles from Downtown Columbus, but the University has undoubtedly been the greatest catalyst for downtown redevelopment in Columbus in recent decades. Columbus State intended to develop new facilities to support its performing arts program, and realized that Downtown Columbus - outside of its main campus - could be a potential location for new facilities. After much planning, the University developed its RiverPark campus in Downtown Columbus and relocated the University's Art, Music, Theatre, Communications and History Departments. The University acquired vacant space in Downtown Columbus and redeveloped much of the area - often preserving existing facades - to include student apartments for up to 360 students. Investments also included a collaborative effort to develop the city's RiverCenter for the Performing Arts, which is home to the University's Music Department. Downtown business has thrived with many new coffee shops, bookstores, restaurants, and nightlife opening and flourishing, in part due to the influx of college students. The University operates a shuttle between the main campus and its RiverPark campus.

Source: Columbus State University

ACTION 10.2: Partner with Downtown Springfield Inc. (DSI) and the City of Springfield to develop a new Downtown Development Plan that incorporates the existing Mid-Illinois Medical District Master Plan and other initiatives referenced in Objectives 5 and 10.

- Develop a timeline for project planning and implementation, and solicit funding to support plan development.
- Issue a request for proposals and select a consultant to facilitate the planning process.
- Ensure that the planning effort focuses on strategies to increase office occupancy and residential development/density.
- Ensure that new planning efforts leverage successful elements of previous Downtown planning efforts such as the 2002 Regional / Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) report.

ACTION 10.3: Host a “Developer’s Day in Downtown” on an annual basis.

- Partner with DSI to host a “Developer’s Day in Downtown” to showcase available properties, discuss opportunities for redevelopment, and keep developers informed of investment and revitalization efforts.
- Develop a program that includes a tour of downtown properties, an information session on available incentives, and a panel forum on the future of Downtown Springfield including recent and planned investments.

BEST PRACTICE: DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DAY, CENTRAL ATLANTA PROGRESS (ATLANTA, GA)

Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) is a non-profit organization that helps to guide the strategic redevelopment of Downtown Atlanta through a variety of programs and services. CAP hosts an annual “Downtown Development Day” to inform business owners and developers of new initiatives in Downtown Atlanta, promote underutilized parcels that are primed for redevelopment, and provide educational opportunities to interested parties regarding downtown revitalization. The “Day” is partially supported by a sponsorship from the Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) of Atlanta and tickets are sold to individuals interested in the full program. The program varies each year but generally includes an optional tour of underutilized parcels, a keynote speaker, and breakout sessions.

Source: Central Atlanta Progress

ACTION 10.4: Inventory all available office space in Downtown Springfield to evaluate marketability and identify areas that should be targeted for redevelopment.

- Compile information from property owners, key partners such as Downtown Springfield Inc. (DSI), and existing databases of available office space into a single, up-to-date database of available real estate.

- Utilize historical records of occupancy, current property conditions, and long-term land use plans to identify blighted, brownfield, greyfield, and other distressed properties with limited likelihood of re-occupancy absent significant additional investment.

ACTION 10.5: Develop a Storefront Artists Project to showcase local artists while occupying vacant storefronts in Downtown and East Springfield.

- Reach out to property owners of vacant storefronts to gauge their interest in participating in a project that would increase the visibility of their property while exposing the community to local artists.
- Publicize the program and work with key partners in the community to identify artists interested in showcasing their work through the Storefront Artists Project.

BEST PRACTICE: STOREFRONT ARTISTS PROJECT (FALL RIVER, MA)

The Storefront Artists Project was launched in downtown Fall River by the Narrows Center for the Arts, in partnership with Arts United/Fall River, the Fall River Office of Economic Development, and the Chamber of Commerce. The project is supported in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Fall River Storefront Artists (FRSA) approaches the landlords of empty storefronts to lend their vacant street-front space to an artist or arts organization - defined as anyone engaging in a creative endeavor, including the fine arts (painting, sculpture, printmaking, illustration), performance arts (music, dance, theatre, spoken word, etc.), architecture, interior design, graphic design, or new visual media (video, installation, computer programming).

Artists are transforming the windows into art projects, are visible working inside their studios, and open their spaces to viewers every Saturday and one to three evenings a month. The artists assume responsibility for their utilities and for keeping the street façade clean. In return, the landlord provides the space rent-free until they get a signed lease, whereupon they give the artist a 30 to 60 day vacancy notice. The Arts United organization can also act as a property manager when necessary, intervening to deal with legal or logistical issues and providing funds to handle emergencies. Each landlord specifies the kind of arts activities that would be appropriate to his or her space and the organization's Board chooses the best match from the list of artist applicants.

Source: Arts Express, Fall River, MA

ACTION 10.6: Develop an agenda of new, catalytic events to draw residents to Downtown Springfield.

- Work with DSI and YSPN to create a list of new events in Downtown Springfield that increase patronage of downtown businesses, primarily restaurants and retail. One such event could be "Flicks on Fifth" - a bi-weekly or monthly film series showing family-friendly movies outdoors on the grounds of the Old State Capitol.
- Incorporate the list of events identified DSI and YSPN in the web-based surveys referenced in ACTION 9.7 to solicit input on their attractiveness to high school students, college

students, and young professionals. Utilize a variety of other outreach efforts to solicit input from the broader community.

- Identify those events that are the best fit and will be in greatest demand, and begin the process of developing each event.

Objective 11: Promote targeted programs that address racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities and support inclusivity, diversity, and minority engagement in business and community development.

ACTION 11.1: Develop a neighborhood outreach program to build trust, identify neighborhood concerns, and distribute important information in targeted neighborhoods with high poverty, unemployment, crime, and dropout rates.

- Partner with neighborhood organizations, homeowners associations, local governments, police departments, community non-profits, and other relevant organizations to develop an information exchange and neighborhood outreach program to facilitate improved dialogue between residents, community leaders, and government.
- Organize teams of city and/or county staff, law enforcement officers, and community activists with existing networks and familiarity with specific neighborhoods such as East Springfield to develop outreach programs.
- Utilize information from best practice programs around the country to guide planning efforts.
- Task teams with a coordinated, door-to-door outreach effort to: distribute critical information on government, non-profit, and charitable services; identify code and nuisance violations; ask questions and listen to concerns of residents; and identify high “hidden

BEST PRACTICE: TRUSTBUILD (SELMA, AL)

The TRUSTBuild program in Selma, Alabama sends community outreach workers into various neighborhoods to identify critical issues facing residents and deliver information. The city was divided into separate zones and each area was assigned a team of city staff and police officers. These teams conduct door-to-door visits to interview residents about their needs, give out information about city programs, and tell residents about related policies. The effort is intended to improve responsiveness and enhance trust in government agencies.

TRUSTBuild was implemented in three phases: Neighborhood Sweeps; Community Outreach; and Operation CLEO (Community Law Enforcement and Outreach). Neighborhood Sweeps sends four teams into various neighborhoods one week per quarter to identify code and nuisance violations. The Community Outreach Department sends six teams consisting of police officers and community liaisons to visit citizens in their homes and neighborhoods on a daily basis. Operation CLEO targets smaller, concentrated areas that are believed to have a high potential crime element.

Selma’s TRUSTBuild program was honored with the 2007 Award for Municipal Excellence from the National League of Cities and the 2008 Municipal Achievement Award for Public Service from the Alabama League of Municipalities.

Source: City of Selma; Alabama League of Municipalities

crime” areas for increased patrols. Ensure that residents are aware that neighborhood outreach teams are first and foremost intended to listen and respond to homeowner concerns.

- Develop a schedule for team deployment and a system to evaluate effectiveness and revise efforts as necessary.

ACTION 11.2: Establish a set of Community Disparities Task Forces to study and develop solutions to racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in educational attainment and public health.

- Solicit volunteers from the public, private, and non-profit sectors to serve on two task forces: an Education Disparities Task Force and a Health Disparities Task Force.
 - ✓ Education Disparities Task Force: Responsible for the study and identification of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in educational attainment, standardized testing, attendance, graduation, college acceptance, access to financial aid, and other factors across all levels of the pre-Kindergarten through postsecondary education system in Greater Springfield.
 - ✓ Health Disparities Task Force: Responsible for the study and identification of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in health outcomes, health access, insurance coverage, and other factors across all ages and health systems in Greater Springfield.
- Organize Task Forces, assign to the appropriate entities for oversight, or align with existing task forces/committees (such as the GSCC Healthcare Task Force, the Business Education Partnership of Sangamon County, and the Continuum of Learning).
- Establish meeting schedules, reporting mechanisms, and timelines for completing the study, planning, and implementation phases.

ACTION 11.3: Improve minority participation on boards and commissions and other leadership avenues through education and outreach.

- Conduct a full assessment of top-appointed boards, commissions, and other such entities in Greater Springfield to determine the degree to which they represent local demographics.
- Work with partners in the community to reach out to entities with boards and commissions that are inconsistent with local demographics to emphasize the importance of inclusivity in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.
- Leverage relationships with minority-interest groups to develop a consistently-updated database of minorities interested in serving in leadership positions throughout the community.

- ⦿ Identify and develop plans to address any barriers to the expansion of inclusivity and minority participation on boards, commissions, and other such entities.

ACTION 11.4: Develop a minority business mentorship program.

- ⦿ Work with the Springfield Project, the Springfield Black Chamber of Commerce, the SBDC, the Springfield Chapter of SCORE, and other community partners to develop a minority business mentorship program.
- ⦿ Reach out to established and successful minority business owners throughout the community to gauge their interest and willingness to serve as volunteer mentors.
- ⦿ If necessary, develop formal curriculum leveraging existing partners and resources to support mentors and mentees, including but not limited to financial management, accounting, and reporting; public speaking and presentation skills; the use of social media; network development; etc.
- ⦿ Connect the mentorship program to the successful, collaborative micro loan program (ACTION 4.4).

ACTION 11.5: Work with The Springfield Project to develop targeted incentives to encourage investment and redevelopment in East Springfield, including but not limited to the East Springfield Neighborhood of Hope (“The Hope Neighborhood”).

- ⦿ Work with The Springfield Project and city officials to develop a series of targeted incentives available to developers pursuing projects that align with the community’s and the neighborhood’s vision, as well as existing plans for redevelopment in East Springfield.
- ⦿ Potential opportunities include but are not limited to the following:
 - ✓ Density bonuses
 - ✓ Transfer of development rights
 - ✓ Land banking
 - ✓ Permit fee waivers
 - ✓ Expedited permitting

Objective 12: Improve community aesthetics through beautification efforts that increase resident pride.

ACTION 12.1: Work with Springfield Green to incorporate a non-profit community beautification organization to coordinate and implement a variety of volunteer-supported beautification initiatives.

- Work with Springfield Green and other relevant partners to guide startup efforts.
- Study best practice models from around the country, such as Trees Atlanta.
- Identify key volunteer and staff leadership. Apply for 501(c)(3) status.
- Identify sustainable funding sources including but not limited to public and private contributions, as well as state and federal grants.
- Develop a series of programs to be supported by the organization, potentially including but not limited to
 - ✓ Tree-planting in public spaces
 - ✓ Flower-planting
 - ✓ Litter removal
 - ✓ Graffiti removal

BEST PRACTICE: TREES ATLANTA (ATLANTA, GA)

Trees Atlanta was founded in 1985 by Central Atlanta Progress in a collaborative effort with the Junior League of Atlanta and the Atlanta Parks and Recreation Department. The organization is supported by a number of public, private, and non-profit sponsors, including but not limited to the City of Atlanta, the Home Depot Foundation, the UPS Foundation, Turner Broadcasting System, the Georgia Forestry Commission, the Coca-Cola Company, Emory University, and the Georgia Power Foundation, among many others.

Trees Atlanta's largest program - Neighborhood Arboreta - is a volunteer-driven effort whereby groups of individuals volunteer roughly four hours on a Saturday or Sunday to remove weeds, build beds, and plant trees in yards, sidewalk planting strips, parks, and other spaces within targeted areas of the City in need of beautification efforts.

Since its founding in 1985, Trees Atlanta has planted and distributed more than 75,000 trees, provided continuous care for more than 100,000 trees, coordinated education of roughly 2,000 children and adults on tree planting and tree care annually, and consistently maintained a high satisfaction rate among its thousands of volunteers. The organization has won numerous awards for its impact on Atlanta's environment.

Source: Trees Atlanta



Spring St. (BEFORE)



Spring St. (AFTER)

ACTION 12.2: Develop beautification plans for key activity centers, gateways, and corridors that are targeted for redevelopment.

- Work with the newly formed community beautification organization (see ACTION 12.1) to identify the needs of key activity centers, gateways, and corridors in targeted areas of Sangamon County.
- Utilize community partners - including but not limited to Springfield Green, local governments, homeowners associations, religious institutions, schools, and employers - to help evaluate needs and develop potential project lists. Examples of potential projects include: litter clean-up along specific roads; tree-planting efforts; weed removal; tree-pruning; graffiti removal; and many other possibilities.
- Coordinate efforts with local governments and property owners.
- Incorporate “Art for Adoption” plans (see ACTION 12.4).

ACTION 12.3: Help coordinate a large-scale, annual, volunteer-driven Community Beautification Day.

- Work with the newly formed community beautification organization (see ACTION 12.1) to coordinate an annual, volunteer-driven community beautification day.
- Utilize beautification plans (see ACTION 12.2) to inform project needs for the community beautification day.
- Develop an outreach plan to solicit a large number of volunteers to participate in the annual, single-day event. Leverage local media extensively. Set high goals in terms of volunteer commitments (thousands).
- Work with regional employers - large and small - to gain support and encourage commitments from employees. Organize volunteer teams around employers, schools, religious institutions, and other groups that would be interested in participating in a weekend community beautification effort.
- Assign teams to specific neighborhoods and projects. Identify a team leader to help coordinate and communicate individual team/project efforts.

ACTION 12.4: Develop a corporate-sponsored “Art for Adoption” program to encourage more public art in key activity centers and along corridors targeted for redevelopment.

- Develop a program in partnership with local governments that would solicit corporate donations to fund public art, including but not limited to sculptures, creative landscape architecture, downtown murals, and other forms of physical public art.

- Work with local governments and other relevant partners to identify the appropriate locations for public art, with particular emphasis placed on entryways to the City, gateways to key activity centers, and corridors that are targeted for redevelopment.
- Develop a system (such as signage) to prominently honor sponsoring corporations alongside the art and artist.
- Issue requests for qualifications and proposals for public art, including but not limited to murals and sculptures, to be displayed prominently in identified public spaces and private properties interested in participating in the program.
- Focus requests on art that aligns with any pre-existing heritage or cultural attributes that wish to be preserved in a specific area (e.g. Lincoln-related art in Downtown Springfield).

BEST PRACTICE: PUBLIC ART IN DOTHAN (DOTHAN, AL)

Known as the “official mural city of Alabama,” Dothan features 19 colorful murals painted on downtown buildings depicting the history of southeast Alabama, southwest Georgia, and the panhandle of Florida. Visitors can pick up a brochure and take a self-guided tour or secure a free guide for larger groups

Some examples of the murals include a salute to the peanut industry, a history of nearby military installation Fort Rucker and women in the Wiregrass region. Other murals depict the African-American Airman group that flew during World War II and a salute to Johnny McBrown, who was a major cowboy film star from Dothan.

Every year in May, Dothan hosts the Wiregrass Festival of Murals art and music event. The festival features free concerts, children's events, a five-acre flea market, tours of Dothan's historic murals, and numerous food and crafts booths.

Source: The Downtown Group - Dothan, Alabama



Objective 13: Establish a college town atmosphere around the campuses of Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) and the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS).

ACTION 13.1: Target a major new mixed-use center near the UIS and LLCC Campuses.

- ⦿ Work with UIS, LLCC, the LLCC Foundation, and other property owners around the campuses to identify best fit sites for a new mixed-use center that incorporates retail, food service, entertainment, personal services, and other uses that are attractive to both residential and commuter students.
- ⦿ Work with city officials to rezone property (if necessary), conduct site assessments, and evaluate infrastructure needs.
- ⦿ Conduct site tours, preliminary site planning, and extend incentives to catalyze development.
- ⦿ Evaluate the viability of developing additional recreational or public gathering spaces on land adjacent to the campuses that could increase the attractiveness of the area targeted for mixed-use development. This could include but is not limited to public park facilities or an outdoor amphitheater.

ACTION 13.2: Pursue a variety of efforts to build resident pride in UIS and better incorporate the University into the community fabric.

- ⦿ Assist UIS in the development, promotion, and recognition of campus traditions.
 - ✓ Examine traditions from higher education institutions around the country to develop ideas for new traditions.
 - ✓ Consider “The Rock” concept: a large stone (often more than 10 feet in diameter) that is painted by students to promote athletic events, fraternal events, clubs, performances, and other campus events. “The Rock” concept is a popular means of building and exhibiting school spirit - a concept that could be applied at UIS and strategically located in a position that is visible to residential and commuter students, as well as residents passing by campus.
- ⦿ Better incorporate UIS facilities, logos, and branding into marketing materials and graphical branding efforts of Greater Springfield.
- ⦿ Aggressively promote UIS athletic events and encourage various organizations such as the GSCC, YSPN, the United Way, and others to connect their networks and events to the support of UIS athletics.

CONCLUSION

Greater Springfield, Illinois is at a critical point in its history. The region has endured the recent “Great Recession” better than most. However, much of this stability is born from the region’s high concentration of employment in government, health care, and education. While health care will continue to fuel growth across the country in the coming decades, the region will need to support the development of new growth engines if it wishes to experience steady income growth and produce new employment opportunities for future generations. In addition, the region is currently facing a potential shortage of workers in the decades to come as a result of outmigration, and aging population, and a relative lack of young professionals. Investments in the character of the community and its attractiveness to diverse populations will be critical to building the sustainable workforce that is necessary to support future economic growth.

This *Economic Development Strategy* for Greater Springfield is intended to serve as the next chapter in the region’s history – a proactive tool for addressing the aforementioned challenges. Great progress has already been exhibited in recent years through the collaborative efforts of the Quantum Growth Partnership (Q5). This *Strategy* will build on those successes and challenge the region’s leadership to think and act in bold new ways. And while this *Strategy* will require a continued commitment from the public, private, and non-profit sectors, these partners must recognize that it cannot be done all at once. Effective implementation will take years, but today’s investments can guide the region’s future and improve the prospects of many generations to come. Successful communities know that economic development is a marathon, not a sprint. The competition among regions for jobs, investments, and workers is greater than ever before. The community needs a sustained, long-term effort. This *Strategy* is the next phase in that effort – a critical step in the development of a more prosperous future for existing and future residents of Greater Springfield.