

RECAP: “Make It Your Business: A Community Discussion with the EDP”

*5-6:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 5, 2016
Boyle County Cooperative Extension Office, 99 Corporate Drive*

OVERVIEW:

The Danville-Boyle County Economic Development Partnership invited the public to attend the second in a series of open forums to discuss successful economic and community development in Danville and Boyle County. There were 42 people in attendance. Attendees were divided into five groups and were given 20 minutes to discuss and answer each of the following questions:

1. In your group’s view, what are our community’s top priorities to ensure successful economic and community development?

Please select three top priorities from the working list below. Feel free to add an additional initiative not included in this working list OR modify one of the existing options.

- “Smart growth” (land use planning to avoid urban sprawl and promote walkable urban areas)
- New retail/restaurant options
- Industrial recruitment/expansion
- Tourism
- Parks/recreation/trails
- Small independent businesses/entrepreneurs
- Historic preservation
- Downtown business recruitment/growth
- Health care services
- Wage/income growth
- Retiree attraction/relocation
- Workforce training/education
- Other: _____

2. What should we be doing to achieve these priorities for successful community and economic development in Boyle County?

Take each of your selections from Question 1 and identify a set of initiatives, programming, policies, collaborations, or other tools and tactics that would enable the EDP to accomplish these development priorities for our community. Your ideas can be existing initiatives of the EDP partners or programs you’ve seen work successfully in other communities.

3. How should we measure or gauge our accomplishments as related to the priorities you identified in Question 1?

Take each of your selections from Question 1 and identify statistics or qualitative measure that would help determine the EDP's effectiveness in accomplishing these development priorities for our community.

Once the groups had sufficient time to discuss the questions, a designated spokesperson from each group reported results to the rest of the guests in attendance. Those results were recorded and are outlined below.

RESULTS: GROUP 1

Priorities:

The top three priorities to ensure successful economic development are: **smart growth, workforce training/education, and industrial recruitment/expansion**

To achieve these priorities:

This group noted that all of the priorities listed in question one are connected and necessary to create a balanced community. They also noted that an overall strategy, or "road map," is necessary to connect all of the above priorities for the growth of the community at large. This group wants a "refocus of the term 'smart growth.'" They would also like for the community to develop strong systems to advance environmental protection & sustainable development.

How to measure accomplishments:

There should be a consensus among the public and private partners within the EDP on what data will be used to track metrics. Boyle County needs to know its competition.

RESULTS: GROUP 2

Priorities:

The top three priorities to ensure successful economic development are: **industrial recruitment/workforce, downtown/small business development, smart growth**

To achieve these priorities:

Industrial recruitment/Workforce Development — Schools need to work more with the business community, particularly manufacturing and industry. Find out what are the needs of the business community and what skill sets employers are looking for, then work with schools to determine how to best meet those needs through education. Also strengthen adult education programs.

Downtown/Small Business Development — Planning & Zoning is very important to the success of downtown small business development, and overall development.

Smart Growth/Sustainable Development — Did not record or report on answers to smart growth.

How to measure accomplishments:

This group encourages early childhood testing. They also suggested checking annually with employers to make the current workforce is meeting their needs. In the community, there are many graduates of the Chamber's Leadership Boyle County program, and many of those people should be more plugged in. Drug abuse is a serious issue that needs to be addressed.

RESULTS: GROUP 3

Priorities:

The top three priorities to ensure successful economic development are: **smart growth, /downtown business/new retail, and industrial recruitment.**

To achieve these priorities:

Smart Growth — Planning and Zoning should be recruiting members who understand smart growth initiatives. Create a safe communities initiative. Preserve open spaces and prioritize the preservation of prime farmland. Support the work of the trails alliance.

Downtown Business/New Retail — Recruit more restaurants and small independent businesses. Support the Heart of Danville and infill and adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Create more activities and events to bring people downtown.

Industrial Recruitment — There needs to be better workforce training, and the community should support the expansions of Eastern Kentucky University campus and Bluegrass Community and Technical College.

How to measure accomplishments:

Create a five-year comprehensive plan that embodies smart growth principles. Measure new business licenses, pay roll tax revenue, employment and unemployment stats, and new utilities customers to track growth. Work towards a safe community certification, and continue to build better race relations.

RESULTS: GROUP 4

(This group noted they were concerned about the lack of diversity at the forum.)

Priorities:

The top three priorities to ensure successful economic development are: **smart growth, workforce training/education/industrial recruitment, and tourism.**

To achieve these priorities:

Smart Growth — Demand city and county cooperation beyond Planning & Zoning.

Workforce Training/Education/Industrial Recruitment — Advocate for small business/entrepreneurs — don't just emphasize industrial recruitment. Create more programs for workforce training and education, and utilize the local vocational and technical school.

Tourism — Focus on improving parks and recreation and trails. Historic preservation plays an important role in attracting tourists to the community. Create attractions for retirees, since Danville is considered a retirement destination; and also create more arts and entertainment venues. There needs to be a downtown hotel and grocery store. Make downtown more walkable.

How to measure accomplishments:

Gather data to see where we are and where we should be in three years. Maximize usage of existing spaces, instead of constructing new ones. Find a way to accurately track the number of tourists who stay here to shop and dine, and how much they spend while they are in town. There should be a "hear from the public" section during fiscal court meetings.

RESULTS: GROUP 5

Priorities:

The top three priorities to ensure successful economic development are: **smart growth, small business recruitment/entrepreneurs, and workforce training/education.**

To achieve these priorities:

Smart Growth — Community should hire a city and county planner. Extend the hours at Planning & Zoning to five days a week. Better education on smart growth initiatives in the newspaper, website and social media. Smart growth plans should include cultural amenities and historic preservation.

Small Business Recruitment/Entrepreneurs — Create incubator programs with rent donated for businesses struggling to launch. Prospective businesses need access to more information on city, county and EDP websites to make it easier to learn how to start a business in the community.

Workforce Training/Education — Create more mentoring and showing programs for students. Expand Bluegrass Community and Technical College. Continue to address the heroin problem, and invest more money into resources to help curb the problem.

How to measure accomplishments:

Create a comprehensive plan and follow it. Find ways to track acres of greenspace, number of empty spaces in existing buildings, number of condemned properties,

and demographic breakdowns of residents. Also find ways to track number of clicks on EDP/City/County websites.

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