

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

*7:30-9 a.m., Nov. 4, 2015,  
Heart of Danville Community Room, Boyle County Public Library*

## **OVERVIEW:**

The Danville-Boyle County Economic Development Partnership invited the public attend an open forum on Nov. 4 to discuss successful economic and community development in Danville and Boyle County. There were 69 people in attendance. Attendees were divided into five groups and were given 40 minutes to discuss 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 40 minutes were up, 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, downtown business recruitment/growth and workforce training/education.**

### **To achieve these priorities:**

**Smart Growth** — Revisit Planning & Zoning policies and code enforcement; improve cross communication among P&Z and other agencies; seek broader input from community on land use policies; promote county-wide growth; encourage more training for P&Z and other agencies.

**Downtown Business Recruitment/Growth** — Create an incubator process to help small businesses with grants, incentives, training and business planning; explore other communities' successes; improve real estate infrastructure; and seek downtown development and historical preservation grants.

**Workforce Training/Education** — Develop a stronger partnership between local businesses and schools; create more internship, co-op, and apprenticeship programs for students; develop soft skills; expose students to a wider variety of career opportunities available in the area.

### **How to measure accomplishments:**

Find ways to measure new business success/start-up numbers; measure how many students stay in community after graduation.

## **RESULTS: GROUP 2**

### **Priorities:**

The top three priorities to ensure successful economic development are: **workforce development, tourism, and large/small business expansion and development.**

### **To achieve these priorities:**

**Workforce Development** — Development of soft skills in early childhood education; develop more shadowing and mentoring programs; develop a stronger partnership between local businesses and schools; expand Bluegrass Community

and Technical College so it can offer more programs like the Advanced Manufacturing Technician Program.

**Tourism** — Successful tourism affects many areas like smart growth, parks and recreation, trails, and downtown development; build more on community branding and wayfinding initiatives.

**Large/Small Business Expansion/Development** — Break down barriers that prevent successful business development; modernize Planning & Zoning and redevelop ordinances; encourage more participation in JumpStart and SmartStart initiatives, which are beneficial and successful.

**How to measure accomplishments:**

Ran out of time and didn't complete question.

### **RESULTS: GROUP 3**

**Priorities:**

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

**To achieve these priorities:**

**Smart Growth** — Develop a “smart growth” master plan.

**Workforce Training/Education** — Expand Bluegrass Community & Technical College and its vocational education programs; create more civic engagement in educational programs and develop mentoring program between youth and retirees.

**Small Independent Business/Entrepreneurs** — Expand medical training and jobs; open up public art to support entrepreneurship and small business growth; create more small business incentive packages;

(NOTE: “Right-To-Work” was mentioned several times in Group 3’s notes, which is an overall economic development issue.)

**How to measure accomplishments:**

Figure out ways to measure the number of millennials moving to or staying here in Boyle County; track BCTC enrollment; track small business growth; find out the number of individuals in the community who are not part of the available workforce because of drug use and/or criminal background; look at pedestrian/car accidents to help measure “walkability” in Danville.

### **RESULTS: GROUP 4**

**Priorities:**

The top three priorities to ensure successful economic development are: **workforce training/education, small independent business/entrepreneurs, and health care.**

**To achieve these priorities:**

**Small Independent Business/Entrepreneurs** — create more incentives for small businesses; oppose minimum wage increase; streamline P&Z and make it more “user friendly,” and have someone in the office full time; create programs to ensure business success.

**Workforce Training/Education** — advocate funding for Bluegrass Community and Technical College; work on improving the skilled labor force in the area; support merging Danville and Boyle County school systems; create an area tech center for high school age students; improve partnership between schools and industry.

**Health Care** — address the local drug problem; increase support of parks and recreation.

**How to measure accomplishments:**

Be more intentional with measurements.

## **RESULTS: GROUP 5**

**Priorities:**

The top three priorities to ensure successful economic development are: **smart growth, industrial and small business recruitment, and quality of life.**

**To achieve these priorities:**

**Smart Growth** — Gather more community input on land use map and other “smart growth” ideas.

**Industrial/Small Business Recruitment** — infrastructure is good, but rent is too high, especially in downtown properties; promote shared office spaces to reduce cost for entrepreneurs; increase marketing on Chamber’s small business tools.

**Quality of Life** — Learn how to better accentuate our assets; build a community recreation center, similar to YMCA.

**How to measure accomplishments:**

Results! Results! Results!

## **CONCLUSION:**

This is the first in a series of community conversations the Danville-Boyle County Economic Development Partnership will host to gather input from residents on overall community and economic issues. A working group — comprised of EDP

partner staff, board members, and local government officials — will use the results of these conversations as it moves forward in developing a strategic plan for Boyle County.