Village of Skokie
Economic Development Commission

Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda
2017-2020
Since its inception in 2013, the Village of Skokie Economic Development Commission has been a critical resource for elected officials, Village staff, Skokie businesses, and the region. This is especially true given the fact that Skokie and Chicagoland have positively and collectively transitioned out of one of the most difficult economic periods in nearly 100 years. As a key objective, the Commission began to develop the 2017-2020 Village of Skokie Targeted Economic Strategy & Action Agenda in 2015.

The Economic Development Commission, staff, and community members have spent hundreds of hours and made significant effort to create this document. The tenets of the strategy are based on a number of best practices from a broad base of communities throughout the region and the U.S. In addition, specific practices were recommended as they were deemed relevant for Skokie. The Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda is meant to be the foundation and focus towards the future for the Village in attempting to maximize new and existing opportunities to their highest and most worthwhile potential. In addition, the Village of Skokie Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda is inclusive and appreciates and embraces the community as a whole while recognizing the human, financial, institutional, and social impacts of the economic vitality of the Village overall.

It is important to note that the Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda will never be finished or final. This is a living, breathing document which will change and evolve over time. What may be relevant today may be irrelevant tomorrow. Instantaneous information and economic transformation through technology and innovation will continue to shape the future in ways we can’t even imagine today. Thus, changes must be embraced in order to be as proactive and responsive as possible. The Village of Skokie’s first ever Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda attempts to do just that, focus the Village’s collective economic development efforts and actions towards the future in a proactive and meaningful way.

Sincerely,

John T. Lockerby
Village Manager
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Mission Statement

The Village of Skokie offers a strong and traditional live/work/play/learn environment as well as an emerging center for business attraction, expansion, and start-ups. Skokie’s citizenry prides itself on its ethnic diversity, an evolving commercial and industrial base, world-class shopping, experiential entertainment and dining options, quality municipal services, as well as award winning schools, library and park system. Skokie also is recognized as an emerging center for regional science and technology development and deployment.

Skokie is unique among Chicago area suburbs in its economic diversity which includes businesses from all sizes (small to large), and locations from homegrown to multinational firms which are primarily represented in the following sectors: retail trade, professional services, health care, industrial and manufacturing operations, and scientific and research.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Skokie Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda is multifaceted, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Encompasses a range of disciplines including physical planning, economics, financial planning and marketing;
- Focuses on enhancing competitiveness, increasing sustainable growth and ensuring that growth is inclusive;
- Provides a directed set of activities and research to be undertaken by Village staff and the Skokie Economic Development Commission which support existing and ongoing Village economic development efforts/programs;
- Provides rationale for local government, the private and non-profit sectors, and community members to work together to improve the local economy in an innovative and targeted manner; and
- Seeks to leverage strengths, overcome weaknesses, exploit opportunities, and diminish threats to the Village as a vital and viable Chicagoland municipality.
Process

The following summarizes the Economic Development Commission and staff’s research, workshops, training, subcommittees and activities to date which supported the development of the Skokie Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda.

2015

Village Economic Development (ED) staff presented and the Economic Development Commission analyzed & participated in the following:
- Current economic/demographic conditions/tapestry segmentation for Village of Skokie;
- Business development trends (retention, expansion, entrepreneurial development, business attraction, clusters, etc.); and
- Workforce development (regional and local) programs;
- Workshop facilitated by Commission member Michael Rosen and ED staff to determine Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) for establishing goals and objectives, break-out group sessions, and wrap-up conclusions/next steps for draft Strategy; and
- Subcommittees were created and the Village Manager assigned selected Village staff members to assist the subcommittees in developing key objectives for the Strategy.

2016

Economic Development Commission subcommittees met several times with Village staff and presented their findings and recommendations at an evening workshop in February. Village ED staff developed a strategy outline in March while the preliminary Targeted Economic Development Strategy was presented in May. Final review of the Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda was completed in September with minimal proposed edits offered by Commission members.

2017

The Economic Development Commission received additional points from ED staff for the Marketing and Community Branding portion of the Strategy and approved their inclusion. Village staff and the Commission Chair and Vice Chair reviewed the final Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda and provided input on the presentation to Board of Trustees. Subcommittees continue to meet in order to further their work into actionable items and tasks.
Skokie’s Position*

Skokie’s Position

Recent Rankings and Accolades:

- Ranked 6th in Top 23 Chicagoland Core Mall Markets (Westfield Old Orchard) Retail Sales Growth (Melaniphy & Associates 2017 Retail Sales Report)
- Ranked 7th Among the Top 20 Chicagoland Suburbs in Retail Sales (Melaniphy & Associates 2017 Retail Sales Report)
- Ranked in Top 8 Best Places to Buy Home (Crain’s Chicago Business, 2017)
- Ranked 8th in Highest Median Home Price of Top 20 Wealthiest Midwest Communities in U.S. (> 65,000 pop.)(Nerdwallet.com-2016)
- Ranked 7th in Highest Median Income of Top 20 Wealthiest Midwest Communities in U.S. (> 65,000 pop.)(Nerdwallet.com-2016)
- Ranked 12th in Top 50 Suburbs for Education in America (Movoto Real estate, 2014)
- Ranked as one of Top 100 Most Livable Cities in the U.S. (Livability.com, 2013)
- First U.S. community to have nationally accredited Fire, Police, and Public Works Departments

Key Skokie Indicators – 2017 and 2022 Projections*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2022</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>65,485</td>
<td>66,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>23,895</td>
<td>24,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Size</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>44.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$76,916</td>
<td>$83,881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>$37,404</td>
<td>$41,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Home Value</td>
<td>$332,548</td>
<td>$371,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Income</td>
<td>$102,549</td>
<td>$114,315</td>
</tr>
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Skokie’s Position

Skokie’s Diverse, Talented, and Robust Economic Base – Business & Employment Data*

Skokie’s Position

*Major Strengths (*)

- Advantageous location within Metropolitan Chicago (proximity to O’Hare, City of Chicago, I-94)
- Award-winning municipal services, schools, library, and park systems
- Dense market trade area
- Diversified local economy/business base
- Educated/quality/diverse labor supply
- Established and reliable infrastructure to serve business needs
- Exceptional quality of life
- Superior transportation network (includes regional trail system, public transit, and direct interstate highway access)
- Varied business/industrial zoning and land uses

*Major Opportunities(*)

- Availability of land/buildings for a wide array of commercial real estate purposes
- Continued growth of retail trade
- Growth of Skokie Hospital/medical services expansion
- Illinois Science + Technology Park/availability of wet lab space
- Large-scale residential growth potential (includes renovation of existing housing stock)
- Retention and expansion of Westfield Old Orchard
- Variety of commercial corridors and shopping centers

(*) Major Strengths and Opportunities not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Skokie’s Position

Major Challenges and Threats(*)

- Aging infrastructure, industrial and commercial buildings and housing stock
- Competitive disadvantage when compared to newer industrial parks
- Decrease of manufacturing tax base and shift to service-oriented employment
- Lack of significant ‘millennial’ population and place making for attracting ‘millennials’
- Limited, land-locked growth potential
- Property tax burdens and disparities within Skokie
- State, county assessment and local tax impacts on business

(*) Major Challenges and Threats not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Economic Goals

The key Economic Goals (*) for the Village are stated, but not limited to, the following:

- Continue to capitalize on strengths and determine key economic development niches for ongoing and future branding;
- Ensure highest and best use of existing properties as well as provide stewardship for creative redevelopment opportunities and highest return on investment for the Village;
- Incorporate the Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda into the Village’s Comprehensive Plan;
- Preserve and expand employment opportunities and improve the quality of the local workforce;
- Preserve and expand municipal revenue sources to cover the costs of services and increase quality of life within Village; and
- Retain/expand existing and attract new commercial, industrial, retail, research, and supportive entities.

(*) Key Economic Goals are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Economic Impact Scenarios

Jobs created or retained have a varying degree of impact throughout the local, regional, state, and U.S. economies. As a widely recognized tool to assess how each job “ripples” throughout the community, it is standard practice for economic development organizations to utilize one of two economic impact models. The following assessment is from the IMPLAN model, one of these tools. The following scenarios assume that 100 jobs will either be created or retained in the Village of Skokie for each sector, while 35% of those jobs will be filled by Skokie residents.

For purposes of definition, direct jobs are only those 100 actual jobs created or retained by sector, while indirect jobs are those additional supplier jobs which are derived from the direct activity, and induced jobs are those additional jobs which support both the direct and indirect jobs. Local tax revenues only include the sales, income, and property taxes generated by all jobs and economic output. Total personal income is calculated from the total amount of payroll overall (direct, indirect & Induced) as is the value of the total economic output realized throughout the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Impacts Scenario Per 100 DIRECT Jobs In Skokie By Sector</th>
<th>Bioscience</th>
<th>Healthcare</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
<th>Business Mgmt.</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Manufacturing</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Food &amp; Hospitality</th>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induced</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Jobs</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Residents Supported</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Personal Income (Millions)</td>
<td>$25.77</td>
<td>$12.22</td>
<td>$11.23</td>
<td>$12.04</td>
<td>$10.84</td>
<td>$9.78</td>
<td>$6.71</td>
<td>$6.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Economic Output (Millions)</td>
<td>$29.670</td>
<td>$27.81</td>
<td>$30.84</td>
<td>$27.91</td>
<td>$22.93</td>
<td>$24.32</td>
<td>$17.40</td>
<td>$18.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Tax Revenues</td>
<td>$665,570</td>
<td>$448,690</td>
<td>$471,387</td>
<td>$451,917</td>
<td>$436,976</td>
<td>$471,807</td>
<td>$353,813</td>
<td>$361,120</td>
</tr>
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Source: Village of Skokie, August 1, 2017.
Strategic Objectives

The key Strategic Objectives (*) for the Village are stated, but not limited to, the following:

- Attract external investment (from regional, national, and international sources);
- Continue to examine Village-wide challenges and address deficiencies where possible;
- Continue to explore ‘best practices’ among peer communities with active economic development programs and initiatives in order to create ‘benchmarks’ and potentially amend the existing Village Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda when warranted;
- Encourage investment of more private and public dollars into hard (physical) infrastructure as well as soft infrastructure (including educational and workforce development, institutional support systems, and regulatory issues);
- Encourage the formation of new enterprises via entrepreneurial support;
- Ensure that the local investment climate is functional for all kinds of businesses (e.g., creating a superior ‘environment for investment’);
- Seek a broader variety of businesses to expand in or be attracted to, Skokie;
- Strengthen commercial corridors and improve overall appearance of neighborhood business districts;
- Support newly emerging businesses;
- Support small, medium, and large-sized enterprises;
- Support the growth of impactful and fledgling businesses, specifically with regard to innovative, higher-paying, and clean industries;
- Target certain groups which might be considered disadvantaged for business assistance and workforce development; and
- Target particular areas of the Village for regeneration or growth (establish area-based initiatives) for business retention and expansion purposes.

(*) Strategic Objectives are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Strategic Objectives

The Targeted Economic Development Strategy & Action Agenda covers four (4) distinct areas and includes recommended items which are deemed to be critical to advancing the specific targeted objectives.
Strategic Objectives

Business Development

Retail, Commercial and Service Sector

1. Support continued growth/expansion of primary commercial corridors (Westfield Old Orchard, East and West Touhy Avenue corridors, and the Dempster Street shopping districts) as well as office uses proximate to these thoroughfares.

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Encourage increased retail, residential, entertainment, and employment growth near and within the Westfield Old Orchard Shopping Center via outreach to existing property owners and retention of consultants as needed to engage national and regional tenants to the area;

b. Enhance business to business product and service access via expanded network of supplier information (e.g., Chamber linkages);

c. Investigate cross-promotion of successful retail/commercial districts in order to ‘widen the desirability area’ and encourage increased investment;

d. Review potential costs and resources required for Skokie-wide Wi-Fi access in primary commercial corridors; and

e. Village “portal” for building permits, inspections, applicant access, and Village staff technical support.

(*) Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Strategic Objectives

Business Development

Retail, Commercial and Service Sector

2. Support continued improvement of secondary/neighborhood commercial districts (Church Street, Main Street, Oakton Street, Crawford Avenue, Skokie Boulevard, Howard Street, etc.).

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Assess former neighborhood shopping districts to determine if zoning and land use changes might be warranted;
b. Be small business-friendly;
c. Conduct study/survey of existing and successful neighborhood shopping districts in and outside of Skokie to create better understanding of needs/wants in these locales, and potentially refine strategies designed to attract and keep businesses in these areas;
d. Consider establishing ‘demonstration projects’ to expand the land use possibilities in these areas;
e. Enforce Village codes regarding blight, vacancies and violations (prior to spending funds to market these areas), and examine existing ordinances to confirm best approach to addressing blight and vacancies in these areas;
f. Expand Village commercial rehabilitation assistance to areas outside of Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts;
g. Limit the impact of assessment reductions for ongoing vacant properties that in turn prevents or hinders the reuse or redevelopment of those properties; and
h. Work with property owners and Cook County to examine why some properties have experienced higher assessment values in declining areas.

(*) Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Strategic Objectives

Business Development

Retail, Commercial and Service Sector

3. Support continued redevelopment and improvement of Downtown Skokie.

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Create task force (or other appropriate committee/group) to evaluate Downtown potential, including “New Urbanism” approaches, destination attractions, priority Tax Increment Finance (TIF) projects, competitive disadvantages related to restaurant/bars, patron and employee parking needs, ways to encourage existing property owners to invest in vacant and deteriorating structures, and potential for placing moratorium on certain types of businesses in order to diversify Downtown offerings, etc.;

b. Create task force to study the potential for a Downtown Skokie hotel and support uses;

c. Focus on redevelopment of remaining prime parcels for mixed-use, commercial, and residential uses creating more pedestrian activity, workday population, sales tax collections and overall return on investment potential along Oakton Street, Lincoln Avenue, and Skokie Boulevard; and

d. Limit the impact of assessment reductions for ongoing vacant properties that in turn prevents or hinders the reuse or redevelopment of those properties; and

e. Work with property owners and Cook County to examine why some properties have experienced higher assessment values in declining areas.

(*) Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Strategic Objectives

Business Development

Retail, Commercial and Service Sector

4. Support continued expansion/improvement of the *Illinois Science + Technology Park (ISTP)*.

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Continue to be proactive with Oakton Community College, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago (partner of NorthShore University HealthSystem) to create a stronger university/college presence within or proximate to the ISTP;

b. Engage existing tenant businesses (including NorthShore University HealthSystem), international and headquarter companies to become familiar with spatial and technical needs and to better anticipate future growth plans;

c. Review the original Master Plan for the ISTP, update where necessary, and develop approach to the 8030 Lamon Avenue Building, vacant parcels, parking, and target development within the ISTP;

d. Seek additional global and domestic linkages to higher education, foundations, research labs, etc; and

e. Work closely with ISTP owner American Landmark Properties to further enhance the tech park’s reach beyond its borders as well as to enact a stronger connection to Downtown Skokie merchants and residents (including physical markers in and around entrances to enhance visibility and public awareness at ISTP).

5. Support continued growth of *Skokie Hospital/NorthShore University HealthSystem* as part of an expanded technology and medical services district within Skokie.

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Explore EB-5 Visa Program or other such mechanisms for potential funding/investment in a Skokie Technology/Medical District and/or other appropriate ventures; and

b. Investigate the possibility of working with local banks to create a consortium to provide better financing capabilities for an expanded Skokie Technology/Medical District.

(*) Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Strategic Objectives

Business Development

Industrial Sector

1. Create clear demarcation of specific manufacturing-zoned districts and develop remedial plans for each identified area (e.g., establish a comprehensive “Industrial Zones Strategy”).

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Assess infrastructure needs and what improvements are still needed to incorporate into the Village’s Capital Improvements Plan for each identified area;

b. Assess potential manufacturing zone/district incentives to enhance competitiveness of these areas;

c. Create inventory of all building stock (‘shovel-ready’ and other) and parcels as part of a database or “Property Bank” for potential assembly by Village or private partners (via possible CoStar or other similar provider); and

d. Investigate the possibility of working with local banks to evaluate financial needs and potentially provide financing for specific construction/renovation projects.

2. Determine whether Village permitting processes can be streamlined for industrial and/or larger users.

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Investigate existing building departamental systems and work with staff to improve response time as well as increase transparency for applicants; and

b. Research other communities to obtain and potentially adopt certain ‘best practices’ in this area.

(*): Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Strategic Objectives

Business Development

Industrial Sector

3. Evaluate need for and review potential costs and resources required for Skokie-wide Wi-Fi access in industrial areas.

   Recommended Action Items (*):
   a. Incorporate definitive costs for such improvement in upcoming capital improvement plans; and
   b. Research ‘best practices’ in other communities and produce potential plan for upgrades.

4. Prepare infrastructure and amenities (e.g., nearby restaurants, fitness centers, daycare centers, etc.) plan geared specifically towards existing and potential new industrial users.

   Recommended Action Items (*):
   a. Consider establishing special incentive areas to encourage more direct transactions with other local suppliers/purchasers;
   b. Establish ‘one-stop shop’ for talent access and skill-set needs via Village resources and local employment training organizations;
   c. Expand Village business to business opportunity network between industrial and commercial users;
   d. Identify and pursue new Federal, State and County grants for infrastructure upgrades throughout the industrial areas; and
   e. Utilize Skokie Chamber of Commerce T-100 Group as a resource to attract more Village manufacturing companies to join together (e.g., help to create local manufacturer’s association as Chamber affiliate).

(*) Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Strategic Objectives

Municipal Revenue Enhancement

1. **Focus on undertakings which** *boost spending, wages and overall investment* **in the Village.**

   **Recommended Action Items (*):**
   a. Explore additional ways to create and support a fiscally sound business environment that benefits residents, businesses and the region; and

2. **Investigate ways to further limit the impact of reduced State of Illinois funding over the short and long-term.**

   **Recommended Action Items (*):**
   a. Assess existing policies and examine ‘best practices’ to develop meaningful solutions to this ongoing problem; and
   b. Identify additional funding mechanisms and incentives to address local revenue shortfalls resulting from stalled or reduced State of Illinois funding.

3. **Work with Niles Township and Cook County officials to address prohibitive or disparate assessment practices for commercial properties.**

   **Recommended Action Items (*):**
   a. Continue outreach to new and current legislators/Township and County officials to present Village concerns about local property tax assessment disparities; and
   b. Prepare data which supports the findings of disparity and/or overassessment of specific properties or commercial areas in general.

(*) **Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.**
Strategic Objectives

Municipal Revenue Enhancement

4. Continue to *strengthen partnerships* with local universities, health care providers, life science industries, major financial institutions, and other governments to help build productive alliances in the short and long-term.

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Continue to support, advertise, and attend industry workshops, seminars, symposiums, & conferences, hosted in Skokie as well as within the region to expand Skokie’s network of influence; and

b. Prepare targeted list of existing organizations, companies, and other governments, and set up direct meetings with as many officials as possible annually.

5. *Develop expanded incentive ‘toolbox’* including the use of public/private partnerships in a more aggressive fashion (Tax Increment Financing, County property tax assessment reduction programs, EB-5 Visas, Special Service Agreements, Small Business Administration grants/loans, etc.).

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Prepare detailed evaluation of various incentive tools and their applicability to achieving Village objectives with an eye towards expanding the use of certain programs; and

b. Update Village website describing said tools including successful examples of where they have been utilized.

(*) Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Strategic Objectives

Employment Growth & Workforce

1. *Increase the desirability of Skokie as an employment center*, serve the local and regional business community, retain and attract talented new workers, raise the quality of life, and enhance the Village’s position of supporting job creation, expansion and workforce development.

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Analyze local labor market to identify issues affecting the development of effective educational and training programs;

b. Assess skill gaps and relevancy of program content to employer needs;

c. Research approaches to enhance worker skills and support local businesses to increase the likelihood that residents and workers will contribute to the local economy; and

d. Strengthen partnerships with educational institutions, employers, and State and Local workforce agencies.

2. Ensure that Village and its partners are equipped to assist both residents and businesses in *securing employment/employees*.

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Identify relevant networks of job creators, providers, trainers, and placement organizations;

b. Investigate financial/technical assistance programs (K/12 school-to-work, apprenticeships), facilitate tours between schools and businesses; adopt-a-classroom, business awards for supporting schools; and

c. Work to achieve an “Awareness Campaign” to act as role model and reliable employment resource to local businesses and job-seekers by providing streamlined guidance and support to both.

(*) Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
3. **Strengthen partnerships and conduct needs assessments** with business organizations, existing small, medium and large-scale businesses, and new companies locating to Skokie via ongoing and newly initiated outreach.

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Co-sponsor and/or help to promote traditional and “virtual” job fairs for businesses new to Skokie;

b. Cultivate key employment resource partners (Oakton Community College, School District 219, Skokie Public Library, Chicago and Cook County Workforce Boards, Illinois Department of Economic Security, U.S. Small Business Administration /Department of Labor, etc.);

c. Develop comprehensive guide/pamphlet which details information important to employers and job-seekers; and

d. Work closely with Oakton Community College’s Advisory Councils comprised of existing employers to ascertain specific upcoming employment needs.

(*) Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Strategic Objectives

Marketing & Community Branding

1. Establish a better understanding of how to differentiate Skokie from neighboring towns or similar locales in terms of niche & comparative marketing & community branding.

   Recommended Action Items (*):
   a. Engage a consultant to analyze Skokie peer communities and advise on appropriate niche focus for Skokie. (Note: as an alternate Action Item, Village staff could determine peer communities, assign Economic Development Commission members with one of the communities to research and log their insights on a pre-developed form that would ensure consistent reporting); and
   b. Host brainstorming session with the Economic Development Commission on Skokie’s possible market niche relative to peer communities.

2. Determine key business sectors and/or targets (e.g., healthcare, life sciences, entrepreneurial activities, manufacturing, professional services, retail/restaurants, arts/entertainment) to attract to the Village.

   Recommended Action Items (*):
   a. Develop survey for EDC members to use to gather insights from local and/or regional business community for marketing purposes; and
   b. Investigate best methods for reaching out to above identified industries (e.g., direct approach, trade association memberships, conferences, etc.).

3. Facilitate stronger relationships with regional and national site selection/business location specialists to broaden connections with them in today’s competitive world of online search and marketing practices.

(*) Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
Strategic Objectives

Marketing & Community Branding

4. **Explore neighborhood specific branding** plans which may also correspond to proximate commercial districts (e.g., Andersonville (Chicago), Central Street (Evanston), Dempster Street (Morton Grove)).

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Develop ‘demonstration project’ action plan that includes, but is not limited to, enlisting appropriate Village departments for ‘housekeeping’ and enforcement issues relative to branding/showcasing the area, recruiting the support/input of neighborhood advisors, securing possible designs for identification signage and other branding, etc.; and

b. Identify commercial districts for potential demonstration projects based on geography, visibility, neighborhood resources, and more.

5. **Establish other specialized marketing campaigns** for appropriate goals and objectives.

Recommended Action Items (*):

a. Determine whether specific ‘landmark’ signage opportunities exist within the Village; if so, develop cohesive plan for consistent design, size, etc.; and

b. Explore options for continued economic growth in light of reduced consumer reliance on physical stores and more on e-commerce, seeking national models and strategies.

6. **Enhance the Village’s ability to identify/follow up on leads** and encourage more industry queries via the potential development of a quality Customer Relationship Management database.

7. **Work with professional website developers retained by the Village to facilitate new online marketing and business development components** in order to strengthen the Village’s digital identity and presence.

(*) Recommended Action Items are not listed by priority, but alphabetical order.
About The Skokie Economic Development Commission

The Skokie Economic Development Commission is committed to the continued growth of industrial and commercial developments in the Village. As a working Commission, it provides input from all aspects of the Skokie business community. In an advisory capacity, this Commission made up of Skokie business members provides a sounding board, researching and analyzing issues affecting the quality of life in our Village. It is a resource for elected officials and staff to explore new economic development ideas and changes to Village policies. This Commission may consider and introduce new economic development ideas for consideration to elected officials and staff.

The primary duties of the EDC include:

- Provide input on matters to facilitate sound economic growth and business development.
- Examine opportunities for fostering an attractive economic climate within the Village with respect to both existing and potential new organizations.
- Recommend additional steps and measures to promote economic growth by retaining businesses and attracting new commerce and industry.
- Collaborate with Village elected officials and staff to realize appropriate goals and objectives relating to sound business policies, an increased tax base, and increased employment opportunities.
- Feature a business each meeting as part of its business retention program to educate the community about the business and to recognize the contribution the business has made to Skokie.
- Interact with other commissions on matters of joint interest or initiatives.
The following individuals are to be commended for their tireless efforts and strong consensus for the creation of Skokie’s first Targeted Economic Development Strategy and Action Agenda for 2017-2020.

**Village of Skokie Economic Development Commission:**
Shalom Klein, Chair - Vice President, MK&A, Ltd.
Howard Meyer, Vice Chair – Executive Director, Skokie Chamber of Commerce
Karen Gray-Keeler – Village of Skokie Trustee
David Putrus – Vice President, First Bank & Trust
Billy Haido – IT Consultant, Strategic Consulting Partners
Michael Halliburton MAI, Real Estate Appraiser
Colette Hands – Assoc. V.P. of Continuing Education, Training, and Workforce Development, Oakton Community College District
David Jacobsen – Founder, Chicago Jewish Funerals
Serge Khalimsky – General Manager, Westfield Old Orchard
Karim Lakhani – Assistant Director of Operations, Lakhani Hospitality Group
Ross Mathee – Branch President / Regional Director, NorthShore Community Bank & Trust
Randy Miles – Owner, Village Inn Pizzeria, Sports Bar and Grill
Erica Croan Minchella – Attorney at Law, Minchella & Associates
Kristen Murtos – President, Skokie Hospital / NorthShore University HealthSystem
Sacha Patera, PhD. – Senior Manager, Director Corporate Relations, Dartmouth College
Michael Rosen – Managing Director, Rosen Bioscience Strategies
Edwin Vdovets – Principal, Keeler Real Estate, LLC

**Village of Skokie Staff:**
John Lockerby – Village Manager
Michael Lorge – Corporation Counsel
Len Becker – Economic Development Manager
Leslie Murphy – Economic Development Specialist
Pete Peyer – Community Development Director
Max Slankard – Public Works Director
Ann Tennes – Marketing and Communications Director
Tom Thompson – Economic Development Coordinator (retired)
George VanGeem – Finance Director (retired)
Council-Manager Government

**Mayor**
George Van Dusen

**Manager**
John T. Lockerby

**Clerk**
Pramod C. Shah

**Counsel**
Michael M. Lorge

**Trustees**
Michele L. Bromberg
Karen Gray-Keeler
Ralph Klein
Randall E. Roberts
Edie Sue Sutker
Ilonka Ulrich

**Village of Skokie Awards and Distinctions**

- All-America City Finalist
- American Public Works Association (APWA) Accreditation
- Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)
- Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI)
- Gold Level Clean Air Counts Community
- Governor’s Hometown Award
- Government Finance Officers Association Budget Award
- Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting
- Illinois Law Enforcement Accreditation (ILEAP)
- Insurance Services Office (ISO) Class One Fire Department
- State of Illinois Certified Health Department
- Tree City U.S.A. Designation