

Village of Maple Park
Strategic Planning and Goal Development 2018-2023

“Progress with Purpose”



Prepared by Session Facilitators

Melissa Henriksen, MPP
Senior Research Associate

Gregory Kuhn, Ph.D.
Associate Director
Public Management
and Training

Jeanna Ballard, MPA
Research Associate

NIU Center for Governmental Studies
148 N. Third Street
DeKalb, IL 60115
www.cgs.niu.edu

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

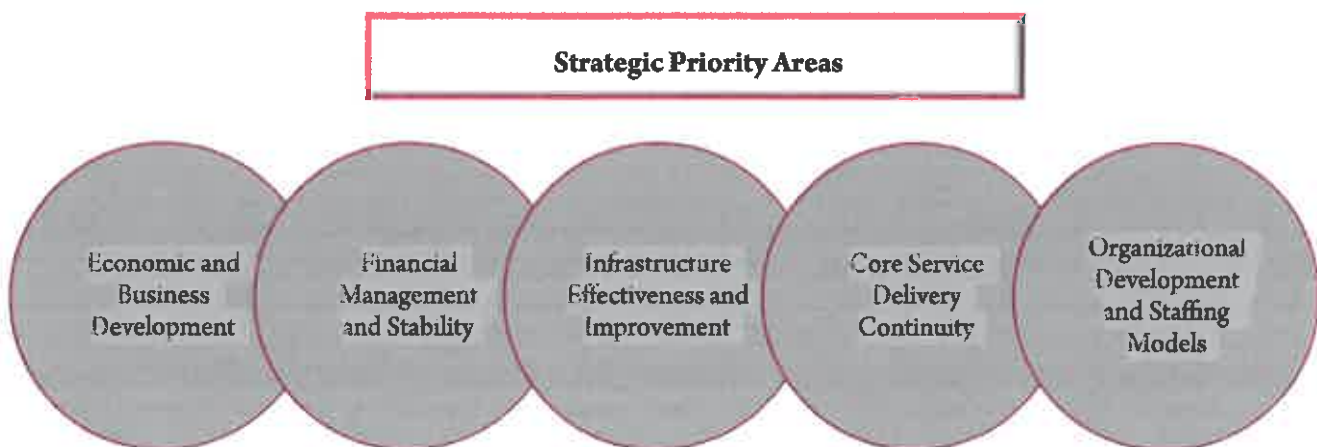
Strategic planning is a preferred approach to guiding a community's future rather than making decisions issue by issue. To this end, the Village of Maple Park pursued, and was awarded, an economic development planning [grant](#) from the DeKalb County Community Foundation ([DCCF](#)) in March 2018 to engage in strategic planning. The Village leadership asked the Center for Governmental Studies ([CGS](#)) at Northern Illinois University (NIU) to facilitate a series of input gathering sessions with its residents, business owners, Village Board members and community partners followed by a strategic planning workshop with Village Board and staff.

Prior to the strategic planning workshop with the Board and staff, CGS worked with Village staff to promote gathering community input. This approach included CGS facilitating an open community forum with 25 attendees from a cross-sector of community members, businesses and community partners as well as interviews with the Village Board and staff. With the community input forum and interviews as a starting point for discussions, the strategic planning workshop with Board and staff members, held on October 13th, 2018, provided a positive atmosphere to set aside time to methodically *strategically* determine where it is Maple Park wants to go as a Village.

Participants at the workshop were involved in several exercises aimed at gathering input regarding Maple Park's mission, vision for the future, opportunities, threats confronting the Village and identification of the key issues that should be addressed to guide the Village's future. Through the strategic planning process, goals and priorities were also identified in the context of the Village's vision and sustaining values.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Ultimately, five key strategic priority areas were identified as an outcome of the process, highlighting activities and initiatives that the Village should focus its resources on in both the short- and long-term. The strategic priority areas identified during the workshop sessions [in no particular order] were economic and business development, financial management and stability, infrastructure effectiveness and improvement, core service delivery continuity, and organizational development and staffing models.



STRATEGIC GOALS

Several key strategic goals were also identified as an outcome of the process. Workshop participants were asked to classify each of the goals developed according to a matrix model of time and complexity. Agreed criteria were used to classify a goal as short- or long-term and as complex or routine (please see full report for defined criteria). Following the classification exercise, the Board was asked to delineate, via an online ranking exercise, which goals should be given higher priority than others. In total, the group developed seven short-term routine goals, seven short-term complex goals, six long-term routine goals, and five long-term complex goals. The top three ranked goals are offered here as a process “snapshot” representing the most important strategic goals or priority areas for the Board and planning committee to address in the months and years ahead. For a full review of all strategic goals/priority areas presented, discussed and ranked, please refer to the full report.

Village of Maple Park 2018-23 Top Goals within Each Quadrant of the Time and Complexity Matrix

SHORT-TERM ROUTINE

- Create a long-term financial plan for the Village including funding for prioritized infrastructure improvements and exploration of new income stream opportunities
- Determine current and future needs for Village Police equipment, training, and staffing
- Evaluate staffing plans and staffing needs for the Village

SHORT-TERM COMPLEX

- Proactively evaluate and develop 5-year capital improvement plan (CIP) that focuses on short and long-term prioritized infrastructure improvements including:
 - Identify how tax increment financing (TIF) funds can best be used to improve the Village
 - Create a downtown development plan that encourages both new business development and existing business growth

LONG-TERM ROUTINE

- Implement a long-term financial plan to ensure that services and economic and community development priorities are accomplished
- Create new development codes and evaluate/modify current codes to encourage consistency and development that complements the current historic downtown and overall community
- Implement the downtown development plan created in short-term goals

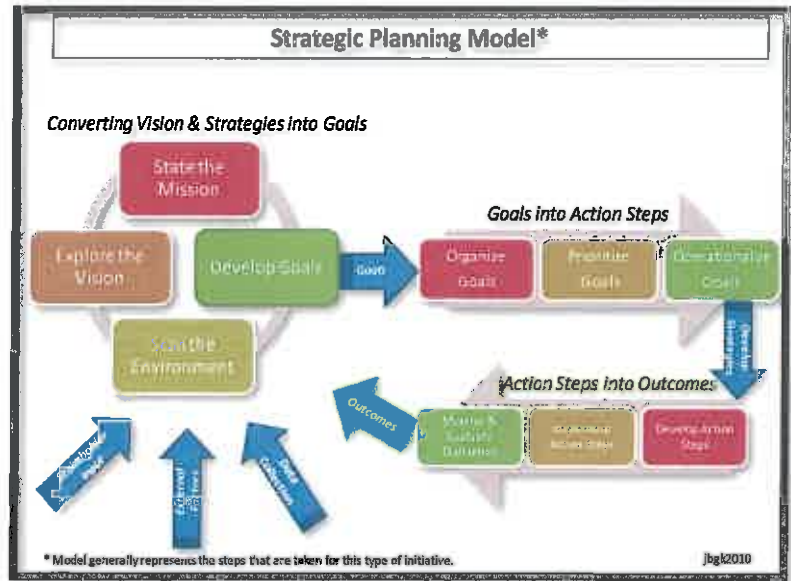
LONG-TERM COMPLEX

- Implement the capital improvement plan developed in short-term goals that supports infrastructure, new and existing business, and residential needs
- Implement long-term economic development programs and policies
- Address facility needs and structure issues

INTRODUCTION

As a Village, Maple Park has now placed itself among the special class of communities that engage in formalized strategic planning and goal setting (Figure 1). Strategic planning sessions are not a new phenomenon for progressive communities and the value of such processes continues to be recognized by policy-making boards and staff members in both private and public organizations. This important work will serve the community well into the coming years. Maple Park’s strategic planning process began in July 2018 with gathering input throughout the community including interviews and an open community forum. After gathering input from stakeholders was complete, a strategic planning workshop was held with Village Board and staff members in October 2018 to discuss a future vision for the Village and establish new goals. The 2018 workshop provided a positive atmosphere to set aside time to methodically, *strategically*, determine where it is the Village wants to go as an organization and a community.

Figure 1. Strategic Planning Model



As was shared with Board and staff members at the conclusion of the workshop, the Village should resist the temptation to re-arrange priorities as the fiscal year moves along. It is important to adhere to the results of the Board and staff members’ efforts throughout the Village’s strategic planning and budgeting processes; do not pull a seemingly easy goal from the bottom of the list of priorities just because it seems easy. This kind of shifting can create a confusing tone in the organization.

Pre-Workshop: Environmental Scanning - Stakeholder Input

Listening to stakeholders is vital to the planning process and is an important part of “taking stock,” which helps Village leadership, residents and businesses to better understand current policy and operational perspectives, perceptions and preferences. In order for the Village of Maple Park to best serve its community in these planning efforts, several input gathering options were used. The first input gathering came in the form of interviews with Village staff members to gain a better understanding of their positions, the issues and challenges they may face, and their initial thoughts on the vision and goals for the Village. The next input gathering phase included an open community forum held at Village Hall with 25 community and business members in September 2018.

The community forum was designed to serve as a primer for the strategic planning process. The information that is presented in this summation was designed to add *exploratory and thematic information* for the Board and staff to consider during the strategic planning workshop (see [Appendix A](#) for a full summary of the community forum).

Community Forum Themes:

➤ For the Village of Maple Park we *envision a future* in which:

- Infrastructure is updated and maintained; prepare for future growth
- Downtown is revitalized with a variety of local businesses and an inviting ambiance (good lighting, consistent signage, parking, benches, etc.)
- Business and economic growth have become a top priority; intentional growth
- There is connectivity of the community through sidewalks, bike paths and gathering spaces
- All ages are able to enjoy the community with activities for youth, families and seniors

➤ The Village of Maple Park *is...*

- A safe, quiet and helpful community
- Change resistant with a need to look towards the future
- Strategically-located close to larger communities, but still rural, small town feel
- A nice quiet place to call home with good schools, safe neighborhoods, and friendly and helpful residents

➤ The Village of Maple Park *offers...*

- Strong, collaborative Village leadership
- An active business community and a destination for tourists (Kuiper's, Winery, Lodi, and others)
- Community events such as Fun Fest and Softball leagues
- Reasonable property taxes and an affordable cost of living (compared to nearby communities)

➤ The Village of Maple Park should *strive towards...*

- Revitalizing downtown to eliminate/lower vacancies
- Increasing recreational opportunities for residents of all ages
- Facilitating a culture of business and economic growth, keep money in Maple Park
- Being prepared for growth of businesses, residential, and commercial (intentional, meaningful growth to the town "know our worth")

➤ The Village of Maple Park's *future expectations and priorities are to...*

- Reinvest in infrastructure, giving current and future residents a safe and appealing community (storm sewer, roads, electrical)
- Revitalize downtown to be aesthetically pleasing and attract/retain a variety of shops and services
- Encourage review of current codes and enforce codes consistently across the community
- Find our niche-what makes Maple Park unique and how can we build on that?

Workshop Outline: Leadership Exercises and Discussion Sessions

The workshop consisted of several exercises and sessions throughout the day. The format for all of the discussion sessions used in the planning effort employed approaches that were highly participative and interactive. The entire process utilized a group discussion approach called 'Nominal Group Technique' where participants are assured equal opportunities to speak and share opinions by the facilitator. During the sessions, individuals had the opportunity to generate and share both individual and group ideas, weigh alternatives, and refine their thinking

through dialogue. As ideas were shared and debated, the group worked steadily toward a consensus of the Village’s mission, values, future directions and priorities.

Workshop Session I. Introduction Exercise – Visioning or Key Issue

Each participant engaged in a visioning or key issue exercise by selecting an item from the “garage sale” table and using the items to describe a key topic or issue the group should address within the next 1-3 years. Participants were asked to think about their ideas ahead of time and then be ready to share them with the group during the first session. This was a brainstorming exercise—any and all ideas about the Village’s future were encouraged and shared. Below is a summary of those answers pertaining to the participant’s item used to describe an issue the Village should focus on in the next 1-3 years.

A. Village Issues to Address in the Short-Term (next 1-3 Years)

GARAGE SALE ITEM	ISSUE ASSOCIATED WITH SELECTED ITEM
Mason jar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic vessel – mix of residents with different needs mixed together looking for direction/identity • Resistant to change – need to set priorities/adapt • Need follow-through
Tractor gear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid core, rusty old – needs to be polished, improve infrastructure
Hydrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety, protocol improvements in Village, no 24-hour police department, funding availability • Maple Park as a whole safe – low crime • Emergency Management Plan – possibly mirror Fire Department (2 counties)
Police car	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment for Police Department – officer safety, funding is an issue – Village growing – introduces new needs – staffing can be a struggle
Hard hat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth/construction – residential and commercial – may not be ready – need plan to help intentional growth – cohesive zoning – Vision for Village
Capitol building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong government – well thought out boundaries. Prioritized strategic plan • Quality employees with tools to do their job • Policies and procedures in place to guide the community through growth/changes • More expensive to postpone infrastructure needs
Brick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible growth – pride in community. Using multiple funding sources such as TIF and sales tax to make needed improvements. Downtown diversified – services/restaurants/bars
Cow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, have department heads – more expertise in specific areas – guide staff
Golf glove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation opportunities – park district golf course, recreation facilities, youth options • Residential growth – increase demand • Destination community • Population will drive many services/staff needs
Chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect different parts of Maple Park – county line an anchor – walkable – bike paths, sidewalks connect old to new, parks, softball

Workshop Session II. Surrender or Lead

Participants were introduced to a leadership exercise titled “Surrender or Lead.” The premise is that sub-groups of the participants work to develop responses to some simple, but effective and thought-provoking questions. Participants were broken up into two working groups and asked to respond to a series of structured questions designed to initiate discussion and reveal perspectives, challenges and frustrations of the participants as a whole. The participants’ responses discussed are recorded below. Underlined sections are key phrases that groups provided in response to the open questions.

Team #1

1. We want to get grants but they take time, expertise and matching funds.
2. The two most important things to focus on are infrastructure and services because of resident expectations.
3. If it weren't for the lack of money, we would be moving forward on our to do list.
4. We need to finally have a plan and connect the community – not just physical but equitable.
5. Having a plan will have the biggest impact on the Village in the coming 2-3 years.

Team #2

1. We want to progress with purpose.
2. The two most important things to focus on are responsible growth and decisive leadership but without regrets.
3. If it weren't for limited funds (property taxes), we would provide great services.
4. We need to finally plan for the future of Maple Park.
5. Coexistence/Collaboration will have the biggest impact on the Village in the coming 2-3 years.

The next step of the strategic planning process was a review and accounting of the internal and external factors present in the environment that could potentially impact the success of Maple Park, both negatively and positively. Given the exploratory statements and challenges raised in the Surrender or Lead exercise, participants were then asked to identify what constraints and practical difficulties are likely to be encountered that will make it difficult to achieve the desired future state. These elements included both internal and external factors, conditions, trends, regulations, agencies, resources, etc. Furthermore, what are the Village's strengths (S) and weaknesses (W)? In what areas does it regularly excel, and in what areas are there difficulties or shortcomings in terms of expertise, resources, training, etc.? What opportunities (O) are on the horizon that can be used to its advantage? Conversely, what trends or threats (T) lie ahead that would be obstacles or hindrances?

S.W.O.T. Exercise
(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Internal

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Board • Good Board/employee relationship/trust • Good vice president • Financial management • Maple Park is blessed to have good employees • TIF funding and are unique • TIF district • Young committee/influx and long-term residents • Location • Intersection traffic Route 38 • Close to NIU – 7 miles • Close to Randall Road – 15 miles • Lower cost of living • Lower taxes • Open to businesses interested in business • Responsive to service requests • Improved website, Facebook page • Emergency call-out • Services for residents • Accessible • Safety • Quality of life/rural setting – small town feel • Access to health care • Maple Park/Countryside fire and paramedics • Community involvement and volunteers • Developable land • No big box store that has to be redone • Affordable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low revenues • Property tax reliant • Staffing levels • Ability to attract qualified talent • Compensation and benefits are weak • In-house expertise/capacity and selecting experts to help us • Need expertise to maximize the TIF. • More reactive than proactive on goals • No village manager for expertise, ideas, implementation • No access to I-88 • No boundary agreement on all 4 corners • Downtown parking • Curbs and street cross sections • Drainage • Parks • Infrastructure • Water system • Bike paths, sidewalk connections • Maintenance of streets and sidewalks • Lack of diversity of tax base • Communication system • Village services off hours • Need good PR information for residents or businesses • No economic development committee or staff

S.W.O.T. Exercise Cont'd
(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

External

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't have big box empty stores – learned from mistakes • Development • TIF funding • Rehabable homes available – affordable housing • Village manager – professional staff, oversee, grants, etc. • Entertainment/activities – all ages • Location – traffic flow • Good for development • Downtown business/development • Address train noise – improve quality of life • More organized youth activities • Internet sales tax • sales tax • Sycamore Park District Partnership– use new facility on Airport Road • I-88 could bring higher speed Internet (work with NIU) • Would improve business/residential development • What can Maple Park become? How? • Connectivity – physical and community buy-in • Spillover from Elburn's growth • Create/upgrade new resident package • Engaged community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property tax dependence • Uncontrolled development • State of Illinois (shared funding) • Location – close to other big hubs – can hinder development • Residents unaware of limited services (Village Hall hours, etc.) • Educating community on where taxes go • Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Roads ○ Water/sewer • Motor fuel tax • Antiquated communication system • Elburn – growth draws attention to Maple Park

Workshop Session IV. Nominal Group Goal Identification

This dynamic session provided the forum for the collaborative establishment of strategic goals and objectives necessary to achieve the future vision of the planning committee. With the preceding sessions serving as a sound foundation for goal setting, the final session was a healthy group discussion of goals or strategies needed to achieve the future visions as expressed by the group. To begin the process, each participant was allotted time to highlight the two or three most important policy/program goals that he or she thinks Maple Park should accomplish in the next one to five years.

Goals could be highly specific or general. Again, only questions of clarification were permitted to be asked during this session. Evaluative or judgmental assertions/debates were deferred to a follow-up session where all participants engaged in open discussions of the goals or action items, their impact on the region, the Village, and their relative importance to Maple Park's current or future circumstances.

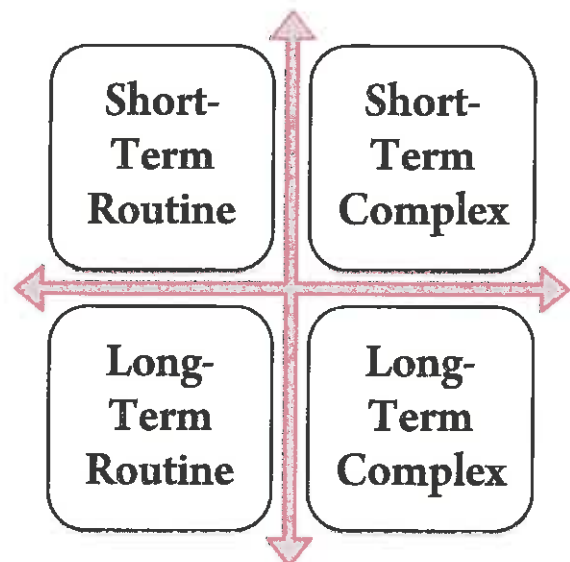
Classification. All statements were recorded on flipchart paper. At the end of the open discussion, participants were asked to classify each goal according to a matrix model of time and complexity. Agreed upon criteria were used to classify a goal as short- or long-term and as complex or routine (Figure 2). *Short-term goals* were those goals that could or should be completed or substantially underway in the next 1-3 years. *Long-term goals* were those goals that could or should be completed or substantially underway in the next 4-8 years. *Complex goals* were goals that required extraordinary resources, specialists, funding, or the agreement of outside Villages or agencies. *Routine goals*, although not necessarily simple, were goals that could be accomplished upon unilateral decision of the Board and within present budget streams or with minor revenue enhancements or reallocations. The purpose of the exercise is to group goals of roughly the same type together so when prioritization occurs, the participants can avoid the problem of comparing "apples to oranges".

Open Group Discussion and Consolidation of Goals

This final phase of the discussion served as the forum for the Maple Park Board and staff to discuss, evaluate and debate the ideas and goals offered by each participant in the previous sessions. Participants were asked to give their opinions, evaluations and judgments of the worthiness and value of different policy objectives. In total, the group developed seven short-term routine goals, seven short-term complex goals, six long-term routine goals and five long-term complex goals.

Figure 2. Goal Complexity Matrix

– Professor G. Gabris

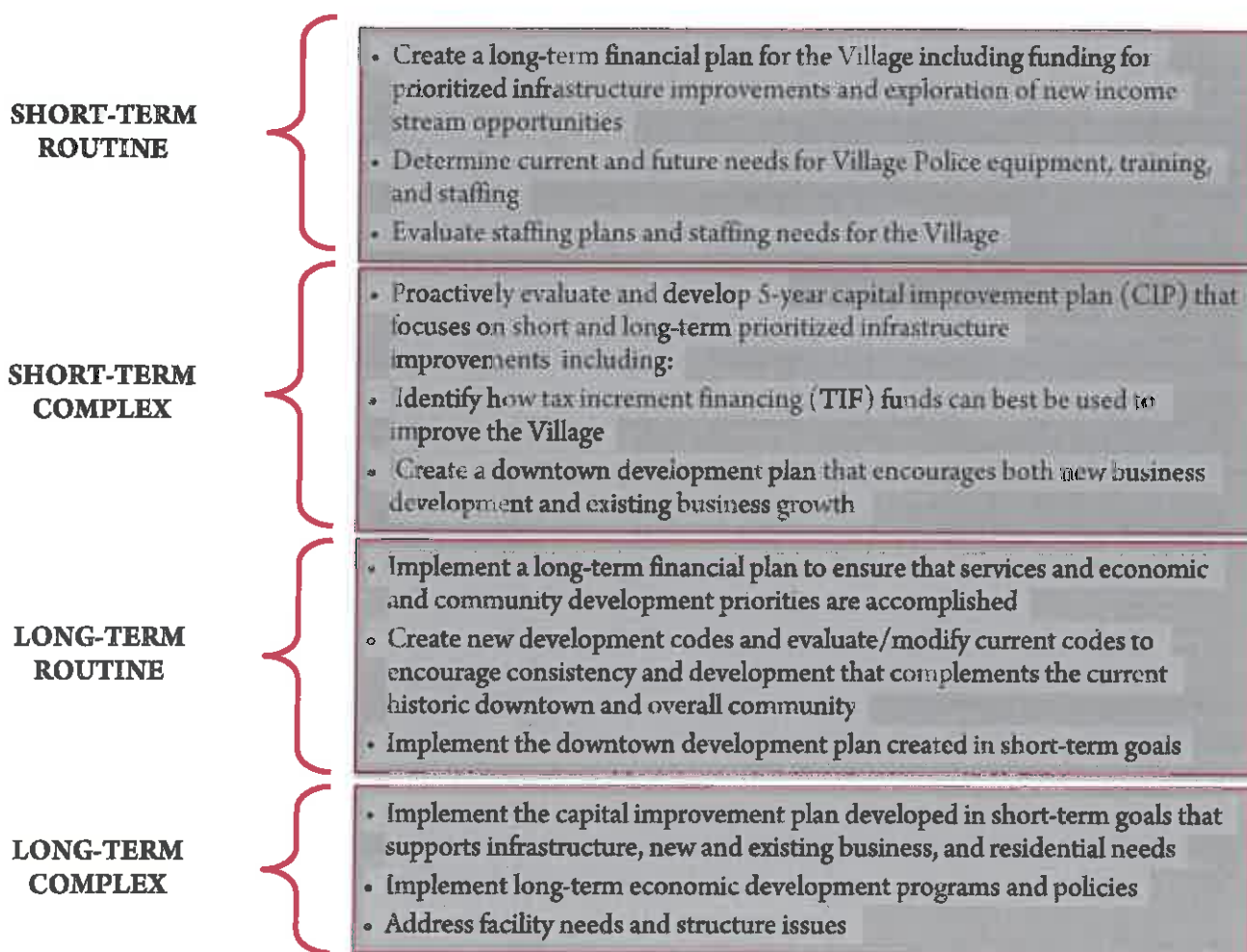


Prioritization of Goals

Following the classification exercise, the group was asked to delineate, via an online ranking exercise, which goals should be given higher priority than others. Village Board members were provided an online ranking tool where point values were assigned to each goal in each quadrant of the matrix by individuals. The calculation of goal ranking consisted of “forced ranking” where the ranking of each identified goal is averaged by the rankings from all Board members. For example, if a goal scored a 2, 5, 6, 6, 1, 2 and 3, the average total would be 3.57. **The lower the score, the higher the priority.** Again, average totals were based on the ratings provided by Board members.

The following presents the Board’s top prioritized goals, within each quadrant, as they emerged from the consensus ranking exercise (Figure 3). The top three goals based on the Board’s average scores are offered here as a process “snapshot” of the most important strategic goals or issue areas for the Board and staff members to address in the months and years ahead. For a full review and appreciation of all the strategic goals discussed and ranked, please see [Appendix B](#).

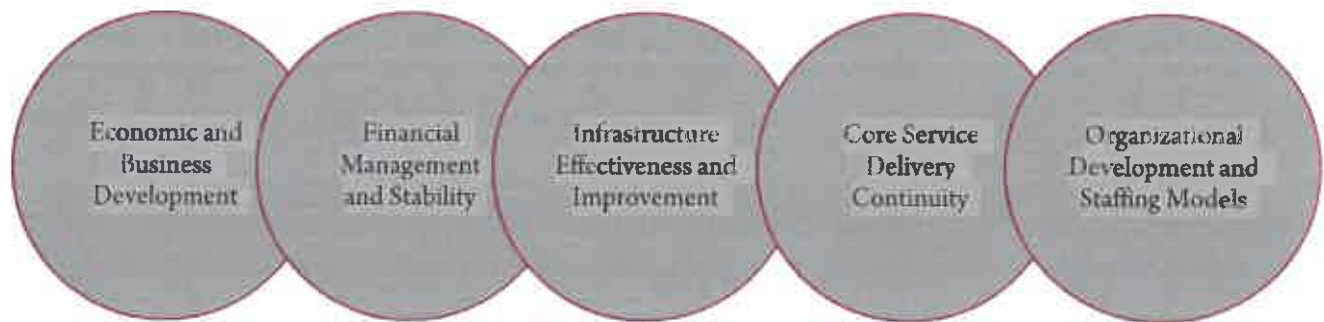
Figure 3. Village of Maple Park 2018 Top Three Goals within Each Time and Complexity Quadrant



STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

Several key strategic priority areas surfaced during the sessions and were observable in many of the goal areas (Figure 4). The five thematic strategic priority areas [in no particular order] are economic and business development, financial management and stability, infrastructure effectiveness and improvement, core service delivery continuity, organizational development and staffing models.

Figure 4. Strategic Priority Areas



INNOVATIVE IDEAS AND RESOURCES

During Maple Park's strategic planning process, CGS shared potential funding resources and other communities that have undertaken similar projects that the Village of Maple Park may find useful as it implements the action plan. It is important to note that most grant funding is meant to leverage the resources of the Village and not completely cover the cost of any one project. In addition, several of the grant programs for state and federal funding can be temporarily suspended due to availability of finances and other extenuating circumstances, so monitoring funding sources on an on-going basis for availability and due dates will be important. Some of the programs either give priority to, or exclusively fund, 501-C3 non-profits so this may be something the Village explores. This list is by no means exhaustive, but is meant to highlight several areas and programs that align with the goals and needs discussed by the community.

Partnerships with NIU and Kishwaukee College

Partnerships with Kishwaukee and NIU's Department of Biological Sciences for landscaping/horticulture research (i.e., dedicate a specified number of feet around the pond for planting, cultivating, maintaining and researching plant specimens). NIU and Kishwaukee have access to greenhouses, faculty and students to serve communities through outreach programs. They could also serve as an opportunity for students to obtain internships through this type of an outreach program in the Village. <https://niu.edu/biology/academics/graduate-studies/plant-sciences.shtml>



Growing Communities Initiative Toolbox

The Growing Communities Initiative (GCI) Toolbox - is designed to provide tools to help communities address issues, plan and carry out improvement projects, grow businesses and run organizations effectively.

New ways of doing business and changing lifestyle preferences have created many opportunities and challenges for Illinois communities. The Growing Communities Initiative simplifies the route to community growth by providing the tools you need - all in one place. <https://cgs.niu.edu/Growing-Communities/Toolbox/index.shtml>



Think Local

The DeKalb County Community Foundation (DCCF), through the [Community Needs Grant Program](#), invests in the charitable efforts of non-profit and community organizations throughout DeKalb County. Applications are available online for two months immediately prior to the March 1 and September 1 grant deadlines. Applicants requesting \$25,000 or more must contact the Community Foundation Grants Manager, Becky Zantout (815- 748-5383 or becky@dekalbccf.org), by February 1 for the spring grant season or August 1 for the fall grant season. Potential applicants for any grant amount are strongly encouraged to contact the Community Foundation prior to the grant deadline for help facilitating a successful application process. Grants are typically one-time awards supporting projects that will be completed within one year.



The Board has broadly defined the goals and priorities of its Community Needs grant making as follows:

- Promote and enhance organizations whose services benefit the residents of DeKalb County.
- Assist existing agencies to better respond to clearly defined unmet needs within the community.
- Encourage programs and projects that enhance cooperation and collaboration among organizations within DeKalb County. Examples of collaboration include partnering with community organizations, demonstrating community leadership and being a contributing member of the DeKalb County Nonprofit Partnership (DCNP).
- Leverage funds and in-kind support, such as using "seed" money, "match" and "challenge" grants and funds from multiple sources.

Revolving Loan Fund-United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA)

The [Rural Economic Development Loan](#) and Grant program provides funding for rural projects through local utility organizations. USDA provides zero-interest loans to local utilities which they, in turn, pass through to local businesses (ultimate recipients) for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. The ultimate recipients repay the lending utility directly. The utility is responsible for repayment to USDA. USDA provides grants to local utility organizations which use the funding to establish revolving loan funds (RLF). Loans are made from the revolving loan funds to projects that will create or retain rural jobs.

When the revolving loan fund is terminated, the grant is repaid to USDA. Funds can be used for many eligible projects including but not limited to:

- Business incubators
- Community development assistance to nonprofits and public bodies (particularly for job creation or enhancement)
- Facilities and equipment to educate and train rural residents to facilitate economic development
- Facilities and equipment for medical care for rural residents
- Start-up venture costs, including, but not limited to, financing fixed assets such as real estate, buildings, equipment or working capital
- Business expansion
- Technical assistance

Home Rehabilitation-Home Depot [Community Impact Grants](#)

The Home Depot Foundation offers grants, up to \$5,000, to IRS-registered 501c designated organizations and tax-exempt public service agencies in the U.S. that are using the power of volunteers to improve the physical health of their community. Grants are given in the form of Home Depot gift cards for the purchase of tools, materials, or services.

The primary goal is to provide grants and volunteer opportunities to support the renovation, refurbishment, retrofitting, accessibility modifications, and/or weatherization of existing homes, centers, schools and other similar facilities.

Illinois Housing Authority- [Revitalization and Repair Program](#)

IHDA understands that investing in homes and communities across the state is an effective way to combat the ongoing effects of the housing crisis and assist with revitalization efforts. IHDA works with local governments and non-profit organizations to offer programs that address vacant residential properties and the blight that usually follows to benefit communities. IHDA also funds programs that allow homeowners to make necessary repairs and accessibility improvements, allowing residents to stay in their homes while improving the quality of single-family housing and helping to create vibrancy in neighborhoods throughout Illinois.

Zoning Handbook for Municipal Officials-Illinois Municipal League

This comprehensive handbook explains what zoning is and how to use it in your community. It answers technical questions as well as providing an overview. Options communities can consider are presented and administrative questions addressed. Sample documents are included. <https://www.iml.org/page.cfm?key=2560>

Family Farmed-Farm to Table Dinner Events

Family Farmed provides an annual guide to farm to table dinners within 200 miles of Chicago. The dinners are held throughout the designated geographic area, each setting its unique prices, style, and menu. Seating is by reservation and dinners frequently sell out. See <http://www.familyfarmed.org/farm-dinners/> for more information.

Illinois Made-Illinois Tourism Bureau

Illinois Tourism Bureau promotes attractions and events throughout the state. Its *Illinois Made* program markets unique Illinois products of interest to visitors. Criteria for inclusion in this program are available at <https://www.enjoyillinois.com/illinois-made/illinois-made-criteria/>

Illinois Safe Routes to School Program

Many rural communities lack or have limited financial and human resources to carry out to address aging infrastructure such as sidewalks. However, a safe and complete sidewalk network provides several benefits to communities including improving mobility and walkability for all residents and visitors, encouraging healthy lifestyles, serving recreational uses, and promoting commerce and economic development.



Through the Illinois Safe Routes to School Program many projects may be eligible for funding. Eligible infrastructure projects include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming/speed reduction improvements, traffic control devices, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle facilities, and secure bicycle parking facilities. Eligible non-infrastructure projects include events, equipment, and supplies that help to address areas of Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, and Evaluation. <http://www.idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/local-transportation-partners/county-engineers-and-local-public-agencies/safe-routes-to-school/index>

CONCLUSION

This report's value will be realized if it is used as an active working guide to the Maple Park Board and community members as they pursue the issues explored during the strategic planning process. This report is designed to capture the content of the discussions and to assist the Village in developing action plans in follow-up sessions for appropriate committees and elected officers.

The next step is for the Village Board to review the process and outcomes to this point. Maple Park's Board, in partnership with Village staff, will continue to work on objectives during their ongoing action-planning sessions and regularly scheduled Board meetings. Responsibility for completing the action steps will include individuals who can take the lead in implementing the goals: Board members, staff, community members and volunteers.

What is apparent from the exchange of ideas and dialogue during the input gathering and discussion sessions is that the Village is fortunate to have progressive leadership that is looking ahead. One noted observer summarized the challenges of progress this way:

*"The art of progress is to preserve order amid change,
and change amid order..." -A.N. Whitehead*

We wish you well with the ambitious years that lie ahead.

Melissa Henriksen and Greg Kuhn, Jeanna Ballard, Session Facilitators, NIU Center for Governmental Studies

APPENDIX A: VILLAGE OF MAPLE PARK OPEN COMMUNITY FORUM

One of the key analytical techniques used for focus group notes is an analyst's search for key phrases, words, or terms that cut across all groups. Coding is done by analysts' individual readings of the data, followed by key term searches with the aid of document software. The words and phrases listed below present the results of the study team's analysis of the collected focus group notes. At a glance, the reader can discover what terms were used or referred to most frequently in the feedback notes. Using individual analysts' coding, the researcher identifies terms that recur across groups and across questions. The results are revealing because they highlight key topics or issues that should be weighed and considered when proceeding with strategic planning discussions.

The information that follows is a summary of key themes and topics that emerged during the exploratory open community forum. The forum was designed to serve as a primer for the strategic planning process. The information that is presented in this summation was designed to add *exploratory and thematic information* for the Board and staff to consider during the strategic planning workshop.

Six exploratory questions were asked to participants and are listed below:

1. How would you describe the Village of Maple Park to a stranger or someone who doesn't live or work here?
2. If you left Maple Park tomorrow, and didn't return for 15-20 years, what do you think you'll see, or what do you hope you'll see, when you return?
3. What do you like best about the Village of Maple Park? Related to that, what are the strengths/greatest assets of the Village?
4. Can you identify areas or topics in need of attention or improvement? Related to that, what are the weaknesses/greatest needs in Maple Park? Challenges?
5. What are/should be the top priorities for the Village over the next 3-5 years?
6. If you could change or initiate one key item or thing about the Village, what would it be?

1. How would you describe the Village of Maple Park to a stranger or someone who doesn't live or work here?

- Safe (1), quiet, nice/peaceful, home
- Not a lot of change
- Nice development
- Helpful community (2), friendly (2)
- Great local businesses
- Hard to explain
- Great government
- Great place to be
- Little farm community (1)
- Familiarity (1)
- Small town feel (2)
- Great library, community events (1)
- Caring/sharing across departments, businesses
- Trains are an issue

- Wonderful town to live in (1)
- Everyone knows everyone (1), friendly, safe (1)
- Neighbors always willing to help
- People don't know Maple Park
- Not many changes
- Change resistant
- Not enough focus on the future
- Great parks

2. If you left Maple Park tomorrow, and did not return for 10-15 years, what do you think you'll see, or what do you hope you'll see, when you return?

- Would like to see downtown lighting (2), streetscaping, sidewalk repair
- Improved infrastructure is needed (1)
- Be prepared for growth & changes
- Streets look alike
- More activities for the youth (1), i.e., skate park)
- Downtown lighting
- Residents support
- No vacancies downtown
- Sustainable financial plan to carryout goals
- Attract businesses, people = growth to support community
- New baseball field/improved
- Outdoor amenities/activities
- Become a destination
- Business growth (1)/controlled – incremental } – meaningful for the town
steps/selected } – relieve burden
- Prepared for future growth & changes
- Change layout of the downtown parking
- Better parking & traffic flow/enforcement
 - Improve safety
- Code enforcement – trash containers/address litter issue
- Entertainment options for all ages
- Cuter downtown – lighting, art, gathering places (1), i.e., benches
 - More appealing
- More families walking around
- Development throughout the whole community
- Employment options – work/live community
- Maintain small town feel
- Conservative growth
- Prepared for growth – proactive approach

- Code enforcement (residential)
 - Promote the community

3. What do you like best about the Village of Maple Park? Related to that, what are the strengths/greatest assets of the Village?

- Kuipers Family Farm
 - Winery
 - Christmas tree farm
- } leverage
- Wiltse's Farm Produce and Greenhouses
 - High school – strong school district
 - Small town charm
 - Location (Route 38, 64)
 - Reasonable property taxes
 - Theis – Farmer's market
 - Heritage Hills – good streets
 - Softball games – bring people to town
 - Parade/fireworks at Fun Fest
 - Residents/businesses that care – helping

4. Can you identify areas or topics in need of attention or improvement? Related to that, what are the weaknesses/greatest needs in Village of Maple Park? Challenges?

- Code enforcement
- Law enforcement
- Train (traffic, noise)
- Lack of funding to address train issue
- Change – resistant
- I-88 interchange needed
- Improved communication, i.e., town newsletter, electronic board
- Walkability/sidewalk connectivity
- Infrastructure – storm sewer, sidewalks, streets on the North side
 - Fun Fest dwindling (fundraisers to improve the Fest)

5. What are/should be the top priorities for the Village over the next 3-5 years?

- Infrastructure
 - Roads
 - Streets
 - Electrical
- Storm/sewer improvements in the “vintage” part of town
 - Including ballfields
 - CIP
- Use tax dollars wisely (balance budget)

- Attract industry, businesses
 - Planned/strategic
 - Help generate revenue
- Downtown development
 - Lighting/niche
 - Parking
 - Sidewalks
 - Streetscape
- Adjust mindset to realize vision
- Develop/carryout the Village's mission
- Connectivity through community to enhance walkability, i.e., County Line Road
 - Community support of businesses and events would improve
- Code enforcement (property management, Police, Public Works – consistent throughout the community)
- Bike paths/trails – regional
- Youth activities – updated basketball courts, baseball fields, skate park
- Address train noise

6. If you could change or initiate one key item or thing about the Village, what would it be?

Note: * indicates the number of votes for the priority.

- Storm/sewer improvements in the “vintage” part of town (2) *****
 - Including ballfields
 - CIP
- Downtown development*****
 - Lighting/niche (2)
 - Parking
 - Sidewalks
 - Streetscape
- Code enforcement (property management, Police, Public Works – consistent throughout the community) ***
- Attract industry, businesses **
 - Planned/strategic
 - Help generate revenue
- Youth activities – updated basketball courts, baseball fields, skate park*
- Infrastructure *
 - Roads
 - Streets
 - Electrical

APPENDIX B: VILLAGE OF MAPLE PARK PRIORITIZED SHORT- AND LONG-TERM GOALS*

*Lower the group average, the higher the goal is ranked.

Village of Maple Park Strategic Goal Rankings 2018		
Short-Term Routine		
GROUP AVG	GOAL ID #	GOAL
1.7	STR-6	Create a long-term financial plan for the Village including funding for prioritized infrastructure improvements and exploration of new income stream opportunities
3.6	STR-2	Determine current and future needs for Village Police equipment, training, and staffing
3.7	STR-1	Evaluate staffing plans and staffing needs for the Village -Review the need for new hires in Village departments -Explore hiring a part- or full-time village manager/administrator
4.0	STR-3	Review current zoning regulations and explore new zoning needed including evaluation of comprehensive plan (updated 2015)
4.4	STR-4	Evaluate and prioritize Village Hall improvements including: -Bathroom remodeling -Boiler replacement -Technology updates -Panic button office
5.3	STR-5	Evaluate and inventory administrative best practices for implementation at the Village
5.3	STR-7	Explore downtown beautification strategies that would have an immediate impact on the appearance of the Village such as benches, lighting, flowers/planters, awnings, façade grant program, etc.

Village of Maple Park Strategic Goal Rankings 2018		
Short-Term Complex		
GROUP AVG	GOAL ID #	GOAL
2.1	STC - 1	Proactively evaluate and develop 5-year capital improvement plan (CIP) that focuses on short and long-term prioritized infrastructure improvements including: -Water Tower - Sewage plan -Village Hall maintenance/replacement -Broadband connectivity -Open space usage
2.6	STC - 2	Identify how tax increment financing (TIF) funds can best be used to improve the Village -Explore best practices, consult other communities, identify community needs
3.1	STC - 3	Create a downtown development plan that encourages both new business development and existing business growth -Include the creation of gathering spaces in downtown, identify incentives, branding/marketing efforts, etc.
4.4	STC - 5	Explore water tower site selection for needed water system functionality and capacity
4.9	STC - 7	Work with businesses on the implementation of downtown/Mainstreet beautification -Include façade improvement options or programs that may involve a development plan, policy evaluation, zoning refinements, etc.
5.1	STC - 4	Develop PR/marketing/branding plan for current businesses and the Village that promotes current assets
5.7	STC - 6	Explore establishing a park on the DeKalb County side of the community

Village of Maple Park Strategic Goal Rankings 2018		
Long-Term Routine		
GROUP AVG	GOAL ID #	GOAL
1.9	LTR- 5	Implement a long-term financial plan to ensure that services and economic and community development priorities are accomplished
3.0	LTR- 2	Create new development codes and evaluate/modify current codes to encourage consistency and development that complements the current historic downtown and overall community
3.1	LTR- 1	Implement the downtown development plan created in short-term goals
3.7	LTR- 3	Take steps to establish a Village administrator/manager position and bring a qualified candidate on board
4.6	LTR- 6	Address parking needs and issues -Downtown and ballpark -Enforcement and signage -Address narrow streets
4.7	LTR- 4	Work toward 24 x 7 coverage and staffing in our Police Department

Village of Maple Park Strategic Goal Rankings 2018		
Long-Term Complex		
GROUP AVG	GOAL ID #	GOAL
1.7	LTC - 1	Implement the capital improvement plan developed in short-term goals that supports infrastructure, new and existing business, and residential needs -Vehicle/IT equipment replacement plans -Road repairs/sidewalks -Water and sewer
2.6	LTC - 5	Implement long-term economic development programs and policies -Develop a business retention plan with incentives for new and existing businesses -Implement the public relations, branding and marketing plan developed in short-term goals -Review, and modify, as needed, zoning code provisions that align with the Village's comprehensive plan (updated 2015) -Undertake active business and attraction and recruitment programs -Install fiber and help facilitate the technical needs of businesses, agribusiness, etc.
3.7	LTC - 2	Address facility needs and structure issues -Plans for our 100 year old building/ Village Hall -Implement an ongoing Civic Center Maintenance / Replacement Plan
3.7	LTC - 3	Replace the Village water tower and implement a long-term sewage plan
4.4	LTC - 4	Work with the railroad to establish a Quiet zone crossing; work to ensure that it is completed