



Village of Winfield

Strategic Plan and Goal Development 2021

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Center for
Governmental Studies**

Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development



Table of Contents

- [Executive Summary](#)..... 1
- [Strategic Goals/Initiatives](#)..... 2
- [Introduction](#)..... 5
- [Outline of Workshop: Leadership Exercises and Discussion](#) 6
 - [Session I. Introduction Exercise: Visioning and Important Topics Discussion](#) 6
 - [Session II. Environmental Scanning Part I: Surrender or Lead](#) 8
 - [Session III. Environmental Scanning Part II: Large Group S.W.O.T. Analysis](#) 9
 - [Session IV. Nominal Group Goal Identification](#) 10
- [Strategic Priority Areas](#) 11
- [Conclusion](#) 15



Executive Summary

Strategic planning is a preferred approach to guiding an organization’s future rather than making decisions issue by issue. As an organization, the Village of Winfield has followed a regular process of establishing goals for the Village government and community it serves and engaged the Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) at Northern Illinois University (NIU) to facilitate a strategic planning workshop with Board and senior staff members in August of 2021.

The strategic planning workshop provided a positive atmosphere for the Board and senior staff members to collaboratively review and develop their vision for the Village’s future. Ultimately, workshop participants created strategic goals focusing on where the Village wants to go as an organization in both the short- and long-term. As was discussed and reviewed during the workshop, executive-level strategic planning sessions are a staple of good governance and leadership for progressive organizations and is recommended to be done routinely - every other year or every 3-5 years.

Strategic Priority Areas and Goals Summary

During the strategic planning process, the Village reached consensus to retain the four key strategic priority areas developed from the previous 2018-20 strategic plan. The key strategic issue areas frame the strategic goals and action steps and will ultimately help guide the Village’s most strategic activities. The strategic priority areas identified as a result of the strategic planning process are illustrated below [in no particular order].

Key Strategic Issue Areas



Strategic Goals/Initiatives

After discussions regarding the participants’ visions for the future and their analysis of the Village’s operating environment (e.g., strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges), participants were asked to develop strategic goals. In total, the group developed sixteen (16) new strategic goals/initiatives with each relating to one of the Village’s overarching strategic priority areas. The table below provides a listing of all the strategic goals/initiatives incorporated into the Village’s overarching strategic priority areas.

Village of Winfield-Strategic Plan Summary 2021-2023

Strategic Priority	Desired Outcome	Key Outcome Indicator (KOI)	Target	Strategic Initiatives
Improved Sustainable Revenue FINANCE	increased local revenue	growth in sales tax, property tax, maximize local, state, and federal revenues	annually add 2 or more sales tax producers in Winfield; Add > 1% to EAV per year thru new construction; increase per capita shared revenues; pursue grant opportunities	Provided on following page
	maintain strong financial position	reserve position, bond rating, pension funding	reserves position 25 - 50%; AA Bond Rating; fund Police pension 5%+>actuary-defined contribution level each year	
	maintain equitable financial relationship with CDH	contribution towards cost of Village services	Substantial completion of Phase 1 Town Center Development; attraction of new businesses (TC & KDA)	
Effective Communication CUSTOMER	implement Winfield branding	promote local lifestyle, communities, services, and opportunities;	marketing & communication plan (MCC) approved by 5/22; Community branding initiative	
	better informed residents	Reduce communications gaps	Develop Village communications plan	
	simplified customer transactions	improved resident experience and satisfaction w/ Village services	10% annual increase to 1,600 online transactions; increase online availability of Village services	

Strategic Priority	Desired Outcome	Key Outcome Indicator (KOI)	Target	Strategic Initiatives
Maintain Quality of Life OPERATIONS	maintain infrastructure	roads, water/sewer system, facilities	funding of maintenance schedule; craft water sustainability plan; determine direction for new Police Dept. and Municipal Center	
	remain one of the safest communities in IL	UCR indexes	maintain status as a top 10 community; 5% drop in car crashes	
	adequate staffing to meet service requirements	workload indicators in budget document	staffing deemed aligned as funding/ facilities are available	
	Winfield as a destination	More annual community events	Increase the number of recurring events by 50%	
Community Development GROWTH	development in KDA's to become a desirable destination	development along commercial corridors; revitalized Town Center; annexation opportunities	Roosevelt - 2/3rds sold by 1/23 Town Center - Phase 1A & 1B by 3/22; Explore annexation along St. Charles, Geneva, Roosevelt Roads	
	increased multi-family housing	multi-family units	25 new units annually until build-out	
	stable business sector	vacancy and business retention rates	vacancy & migration rates <10% yearly; Digital marketing for all classes of business	

Strategic Initiatives

Improve Sustainable Revenue

- a. Continue implementing commercial development initiatives on Roosevelt Road and TC
- b. Maintain economic development grant and seek further partnering with NM-CDH
- c. Update 20-year financial forecast and include scenarios for potential developments
- d. Perform debt capacity analysis
- e. Conduct special census for new residential development areas in 2023
- f. Review financial tools to enhance revenue streams
- g. Actively seek and apply for more eligible grant opportunities

Effective Communication

- a. Regular website updates and increased communications through e-blasts and social media
- b. Complete/initiate marketing & communication plan
- c. Continue informational meetings with fellow units of local government
- d. Continue promoting online transactions
- e. Create a multi-platform (newsletter, e-blast, fb, website, etc.) communications plan that provides a strategic approach for internal and external communications for all departments
- f. Identify what Village services can also be provided online and pursue implementation
- g. Evaluate what internal processes can be improved via digital means

Maintaining Quality of Life

- a. Sustain infrastructure maintenance schedule
- b. Fund Riverwalk Park Phase 2 and explore additional vehicle parking opportunities for this park
- c. Work with architect firm to complete new facility evaluation study, choose best direction for Village and begin design & engineering work
- d. Develop water sustainability program
- e. Promote community voluntary surveillance system network
- f. Continue support traffic enforcement program initiative
- g. Assist community groups in making more community-wide events, including events that could occur on a recurring annual basis
- h. Seek opportunities to attract desirable community events for Winfield residents & visitors

Community Development

- a. Coordinate commercial marketing and development strategy along Roosevelt Road
- b. Review incentive strategy to attract commercial and residential developers, updating as necessary
- c. Continue partnership with NM-CDH for development of Town Center and attraction of new businesses
- d. Support high density residential development and additional retail in Town Center
- e. Investigate annexation opportunities on north and south sides of town
- f. Build relationship with Winfield Chamber and explore digital marketing options

Introduction

As an organization, the Village has followed a regular process of establishing goals for the Village government and the community it serves. The Board and senior staff of the Village gathered again in 2021 to review the progress made and continue to move forward towards the future vision expressed for the Village of Winfield. As part of the 2021 process, the Board and senior staff collaboratively worked together to review the previous Strategic Plan’s outcomes and results and evaluate the current operating environment to establish strategic goals to guide the Village over the next 3-5 years. As was discussed and reviewed during the workshop, executive-level retreats and strategic planning sessions are a staple of good governance and leadership for progressive organizations. The value of such processes continues to be recognized by policy-making boards and executive staffs in both private and public organizations and as an organization, you have now placed yourselves among the special class of organizations that engage in formalized strategic planning and goal setting (Figure 1).

With the Village’s experience at strategic planning, the Village has seen the benefits of this strategic approach to guiding the Village’s future. The 2021 workshop provided another positive setting to set aside time to methodically, *strategically*, determine where it is the Village wants to go as a community and as a government. This important undertaking will again work to serve the Village’s residents, businesses, community partners, stakeholders, and organization well into the coming years. We congratulate you on the investment you made in the discussion exercises at the workshop and the exchange of ideas held.

Figure 1. Strategic Planning Model*



**Model generally represents the steps that are taken for this type of initiative.*

As was shared with the Board and senior staff members at the conclusion of the workshop, the Village should resist the temptation to rearrange priorities as the fiscal year moves along. It is important to adhere to the results of the Board’s and senior staff members’ efforts throughout this process and the Village’s budgeting process.

Keep in mind that the judicious use of the Village’s limited resources (including financial resources and professional staff time) will be the key to good results. These high standards can place a strain on the organization, as excellence requires adequate staff time, expertise, and resources. In the end, quality policies and quality implementation equate to tough choices in setting priorities and in allocating resources. Only a limited number of goals and objectives can be effectively managed and implemented at any given time. In a very realistic sense, clear and stable priorities must be maintained if the Village desires to stretch its resources as far as they can go.

Outline of Workshop:

Leadership Exercises and Discussion Sessions

The format for all of the discussion sessions used in the planning effort employed approaches that were highly participative and interactive. The workshop facilitators utilized a group discussion approach called ‘Nominal Group Technique’ where participants were assured equal opportunities to speak and share opinions by the facilitator. During the workshop discussion/exercise sessions, individuals had the opportunity to generate and share their ideas, as well as participate in group activities allowing them to weigh alternatives and refine their thinking through dialogue. As ideas were shared and debated, the group worked steadily toward a consensus regarding the Village’s purpose, future directions, goals, and priorities.

Session I. Introduction Exercise – Visions of the Future

Participants engaged in an exercise designed to stimulate conversation regarding the Board’s and senior staff’s desired future direction and condition of the Village by answering the visioning question: “In 10-15 years when I return to the Village of Winfield, I hope to see, or think I will see with regard to the Village and its activities?” 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 of the workshop. This was a brainstorming exercise—all ideas about the Village’s future were encouraged and shared. No evaluative or judgmental debate was permitted during this session. Below is a summary of those answers.

Village of Winfield Desired Future Condition

Board Responses

- If I left Winfield and didn't return for 10-15 years, I hope I'd see, or think I would see...
- A completed Town Center, with restaurants, retail, gathering spaces, etc.
- Different phases completed for the Town Center, street dining, vibrant
- Municipal building – more specific on number of buildings
- Northwest, Southwest, Northeast corner of Roosevelt Road/Winfield Road
- Relocated Village Hall
- Generate sales tax (non-home rule)
- Need to consider south of tracks long-term
- Annexation along North Avenue corridor and Roosevelt Road
- Be bold
- Technology in organization
- Communication external – trust
- To come back to new festivals/events with live music, visit new dispensary, vibrant downtown – unique, concert at Riverwalk, Village uniquely positioned to take the lead. Finish agenda that has been started. Winfield is a place to discover.
- Vibrant Town Center, unique retail, usage of park and increased development around Roosevelt Road
- Ten years – take on environmental matters, show that local government can take the lead – practical and sustainable
- Thriving and resident-friendly community with amenities and development – Town Center and along Roosevelt, St. Charles, and North Avenue corridors
- Bustling downtown, surrounded by well-maintained natural environment, close-knit neighborhood
- Charming place that people choose to live, unwind, and explore a community, just not to visit, but to call home

Village of Winfield Desired Future Condition

Staff Responses

- Execution of plan – Town Center
 - South of tracks – sub area
 - Fire District property
- Now clearer direction – excitement
- Organization
 - More adequate facility
 - More efficient design for efficiency and customers
- Town Center completed – 5-10 years
- Infrastructure maintained – keep up
- Department fully staffed – Public Works
- Finance
 - More automated
- Development/Building
 - Not much change – continue outsourcing
 - Move more to commercial development during the next 5-10 years
- Police
 - More officers in response to development
 - More daily human resource and public relations issues consuming more time in policing
 - New building/facility – new location
- HR
 - Four generations of workforce in our organization
 - Retention would not be an issue
 - Diversity
 - Lack of redundancy in staffing
 - Succession and depth

Session II. Environmental Scanning Part I

Surrender or Lead

Participants were introduced to a leadership exercise entitled “Surrender or Lead.” Participants were asked, in small groups, to respond to a series of structured questions designed to initiate discussion and reveal hopes, perspectives, challenges, opportunities, and possible barriers based on the collective view of each participant’s group. The groups’ responses were recorded and are reported below. The **bolded** and underlined sections are key phrases that the group provided in response to the exercise’s open-ended questions and prompts.

Group #1

1. We want to **be successful and go to a next stage**, but **we have challenges, friction, and need to think bigger**.
2. The two most important things to focus on are **economic development** and **vision of a new cultural shift** and **revenue and amenities** because **Winfield needs and deserves these things**.
3. If it weren’t for **money and changing demographics**, we would **solve all of our problems, not be as open to development and new ideas**.
4. We need to finally **get our message out**.
5. **Town Center Development** will have the biggest impact on the Village in the next 2-3 years.

Group #2

1. We want to **dream** but **achieve**.
2. The two most important things to focus on are **goals** and **strategy** because **they are the road to success**.
3. If it weren’t for **financing**, we would **do it all**.
4. We need to finally **be bold and dream big**.
5. **Community cohesiveness to successfully complete commercial development** will have the biggest impact on the Village in the next 2-3 years.

Group #3

1. We want to **develop**, but **we need commercial development, external buy-in, commercial interest, a competent developer and market interest**.
2. The two most important things to focus on are **commercial development** and **communication, resident awareness and understanding, and buy-in** because **development creates revenue and sales tax and property tax revenue, a destination, good acquisition, and increased property values**.
3. If it weren’t for **external challenges**, we would **be moving forward more quickly and efficiently**.
4. We need to finally **change the paradigm and actively develop our community**.
5. **Economic development** will have the biggest impact on the Village in the next 2-3 years.

Session III. Environmental Scanning Part II

Large Group S.W.O.C. Analysis

The next step of the strategic planning workshop involved reviewing and accounting for the internal and external factors present in the environment that can potentially influence the success of the Village, 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 challenging to achieve the desired future state. These elements included both internal and external factors, conditions, trends, regulations, agencies, resources, etc. Furthermore, participants were asked to identify the Village’s **strengths (S)** and **weaknesses (W)**. In what areas does the Village 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 the County’s advantage? Conversely, what trends or **challenges (C)** lie ahead that would be obstacles or hindrances? Those answers are captured next.

S.W.O.C. EXERCISE (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges)

Internal

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural surroundings • Intergovernmental cooperation • Forest Preserve • Open space • Northwestern medicine • Public safety/low crime • Professional and ethical staff • Desirable community • Synergy of direction • Involved citizenry • Highly educated workforce/residency • Have a compensation plan and Town Center • Access to transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited revenue sources • Intergovernmental competition • Limited annexation opportunities • Forest preserve land • Northwestern medicine • Other government perception of Village government • Lack of commercial development • Limited staff • Representation for diverse community • Flooding/stormwater

External

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural surroundings • CARES Act funding • A.R.A. funding • Infrastructure funding – from federal or state sources (e.g., infrastructure bill) • Intergovernmental cooperation/collaboration • Annexations • Forest Preserve land • Northwestern medicine • Reputation of Village government • Lack of commercial development • Staffing • Resident involvement • Resident demographics and education • More diverse community education relations • Transportation rail/highways • Strategy to pursue federal funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfunded state mandates • Pandemic • Limited revenue sources • Nature, environmental • Competition between local government bodies • Misinformation • Forest Preserve land • Northwestern Medicine • Public trust • Staffing environment • Working through decisions and how we get there • Resident involvement • Need for more diversity in Village government • Finding residents to serve and run or be on a commission • School district segmentation/divide community residents east of County Farm Road – don't feel part of Winfield • Railroad crossings

Session IV. Nominal Group Goal Identification

With the preceding discussion sessions and exercises acting as a sound foundation for goal setting, the final workshop session was designed for small group work and the development of new or updated goals. The goals were developed, in groups, and then presented by the working groups for large group discussion. All of the goals and/or action items were seen as important to achieving the future visions of the Village as expressed by participants at the opening of the workshop.

To begin the process, participants returned to the small groups they had worked with during the previous Surrender or Lead exercise. Group members were allotted time to highlight the three or four most important policy and program goals they thought the Village should accomplish in the next one to three years. Each of the small groups then shared their goals with the aggregate group of participants. Goals that the groups developed could be extensions or refinements of prior goals or could be new goals. Furthermore, the goals that were developed could be very specific or broader, but all goals pointed to important outcomes that leaders hope to see in the years ahead.

Open Group Discussion and Consolidation of Goals

This final phase of the discussion served as the forum for Village Board members and staff to discuss, refine and compare the ideas and goals offered by each work group in the previous sessions. Participants gave their opinions and further explained the fit and ideas, and policy outcomes expressed in the goals. Following the workshop, NIU-CGS staff worked with the Village's administrative leadership to refine and consolidate the goals, where appropriate.

Strategic Priority Areas

The Village developed four “Key Strategic Issues Areas” to help frame and guide strategic goals during the previous 2018-20 strategic plan. The Village expressed the ongoing fit and help of these strategic issue areas going forward and has retained them to frame the strategic goals and action steps and will ultimately help guide the Village’s most strategic activities for the next 3-4 years. The strategic priority areas identified in 2018-20 are illustrated below:

Key Strategic Issue Areas



Conclusion

The value of the strategic planning process will only be realized if it is used as an active working guide to both the Village Board and staff leadership as the issues explored during the strategic planning process are pursued. It is designed to capture the content of the discussions and to assist the Village in developing implementation plans for their strategic goals/initiatives.

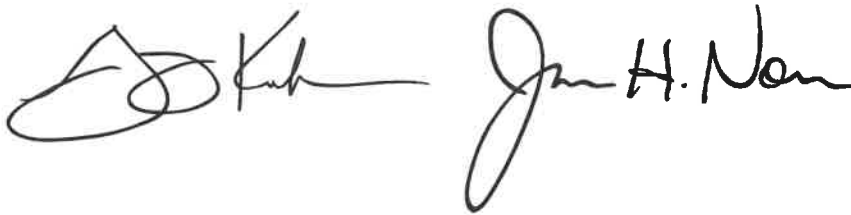
In the Village's ever-evolving operating environment, adapting to the changes in demographics, community trends, technology advancements, best practices, and development opportunities among others will be paramount. The strategic plan is meant to be a road map for the Village with the flexibility to adapt to those changes. Therefore, it is recommended that the Village undertake a regular review (monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually) of the strategic plan, its goals, and implementation schedule to identify the need for updates or modifications to ensure the Village consistently recognizes and meets the changes in community needs and expectations. In addition, many communities engage in regular strategic planning process updates/renewals annually or every 2-3 years.

What is apparent from the exchange of ideas and dialogue during the environmental scanning and strategic planning workshop is that the Village is fortunate to have progressive leadership and a management team that is looking ahead and committed to strategic thinking and planning. One noted observer summarized the challenges of organizational 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.

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is for Greg Kuhn, and the signature on the right is for Jim Norris. Both signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Kuhn and Jim Norris, NIU-CGS Project Coordinators and Session Facilitators