



# STRATEGIC PLAN

SUMMARY REPORT

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April 15, 2024

Dear Nick Cuzzone,

I am pleased to submit to the Village of Villa Park the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan and Summary Report. This plan reflects the organization's goals, commitment to measurable outcomes, and the delivery of quality services to the community. While the Village will continue to concentrate on essentials including the delivery of public services, the Strategic Plan brings focused attention to specific organizational goals and provides a framework for proactive decision making.

It has been a pleasure to assist the Village of Villa Park with this important project, which included the updating of the organization's Vision, Mission, and Values. I particularly wish to thank Matt Harline, Village Manager, the Board, and the staff members who dedicated their time and effort to this process.

Yours truly,

Cory Poris Plasch

President/CEO

CP2 Consulting

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# Executive Summary

Beginning in November of 2023, the Village of Villa Park engaged in a strategic planning process. The process generated strategic goals covering 2024-2028.

The plan consists of four strategic goals, identified as the issues of greatest importance to the Village over the next four years. Each goal has an associated outcome, key outcome indicator, and performance target. These were determined through a facilitated process including board and staff and incorporating stakeholder feedback from focus groups, a community survey, and an internal stakeholder survey.

As part of the strategic planning process, the Vision, Mission and Values were evaluated. Villa Park chose to update their Vision, Mission and Values.

A cross functional team of staff helped to further develop the Strategic Plan by identifying initiatives to achieve the Strategic Goals. This team will continue to work to develop and implement project plans for each initiative and create a communication plan to ensure that staff understand the overall goals, as well as being able to meaningfully incorporate action steps to achieve those goals into their overall responsibilities.



# Vision, Mission, Values

## VISION

To offer a safe, prosperous, family-oriented community, that is innovative, resilient, environmentally conscious and provides a high quality of life.

## MISSION

We are committed to transparency, communication, excellence in public service, being good stewards of community resources and providing support and opportunities for our residents and businesses.

## VALUES

**Welcome home! All are accepted, safe in their identities and valued for one's unique and individual perspective.**

### Service

We are dedicated to being empathetic as we care for the community.

### Integrity

We demand honesty, transparency and the consistent courage to do what is ethical of all staff and elected officials.

### Stewardship

We are committed to the efficient and careful use of the resources entrusted to our care.

### Adaptability

We embrace curiosity and innovation in our approach to the changing needs of our community.



# The Strategic Planning Process

## The Strategic Planning Process seeks to answer five questions:

1. Where are we right now? (Plan Development)
2. Where do we want to be? (Plan Development)
3. How do we get there from here? (Plan Implementation)
4. How will we know when we get there? (Plan Implementation)
5. Are there changes in the future external environment that we need to consider?

### DEVELOPMENT

#### Where are we now?

Scan the Environment  
Conduct Internal and External Analysis  
(SWOT)  
Develop a Strategic Profile  
Identify Strategic Challenges

#### Where are we going?

Define Our Mission  
Articulate Core Values  
Set a Vision  
Identify Key Intended Outcomes

### IMPLEMENTATION

#### How will we get there?

Develop Initiatives  
Define Performance Measures  
Set Targets and Thresholds  
Spread Throughout Organization

#### How will we know?

Create Detailed Action Plans  
Establish Accountability:  
Who, What, When  
Identify Success Indicators

## Assessing the Current Environment

The Strategic Planning Process began with a meeting with the consultant and Villa Park staff. The meeting included a review of strategic planning principles, a discussion of organizational value proposition, the status of vision and mission statements, and a tutorial on preparing an Environmental Scan. The session concluded with a timeline for the planning process, assignments for preparation of the Environmental Scan, and a process for conducting the stakeholder outreach.



# Stakeholder Engagement

To answer the question “**Where are we now?**,” the Strategic Planning Process began with gaining an understanding of the operating environment. This is the first activity in developing a Strategic Plan as internal and external forces, dynamics, and constraints must be considered to arrive at the most effective strategy.

## Assessing the environment included:

- A community survey
- An internal stakeholder survey of employees and commission members
- Focus Groups

As environmental factors change over time, they need to be evaluated and incorporated into the strategic thinking and planning process using current data. As a result, the Focus Groups were limited in scope and consisted of businesses, nonprofits, residents, and employees of the Village. Each Focus Group discussed what participants saw as strengths of Villa Park along with opportunities for change.

The results of these efforts were presented to the Village of Villa Park Board at the first Strategic Planning Session on February 12, 2024. They are summarized below along with links to the complete results.

# Environmental Scan

The Environmental Scan is a description and analysis of the Village of Villa Park, including both internal and external forces and constraints. As the initial phase of the Strategic Planning Process, it provides an opportunity to understand how current and emerging trends interact and provides a framework for understanding relevant issues in planning its future. Staff presented a review of internal operations and current challenges facing the organization.

## Key Takeaways

- Villa Park has seen changes in demographics, when comparing data from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) to the 2017-2021 ACS. Notable changes include:
  - Decrease in homeownership from 77.2% in 2000 to 70.9% in the 2017 -2021 American Community Survey (ACS)
  - Increase in non-English speaking homes from 23.9% to 25.3% with Spanish increasing from 13.9% to 16.9% of households
  - A decrease in the number of people in the percentage of people who speak English less than very well from 9.9 % to 9.0%
  - Increase in the percentage of people 25 years and older who have at least an associate degree from 24.2% in the 2000 census to 43.8% in the 2017 - 2021 ACS
- The greatest challenges faced in the Village Hall are technology, lack of institutional knowledge and tight personnel.
- The Finance staff has been cut to a point where separation of duties for good fiscal control limits the number of people capable of doing certain tasks to a single person.
- Staffing levels need to be evaluated throughout the organization to determine how to right-size staffing levels in every department to respond to current and future needs.
- The Village continues to focus on outreach and communication strategies to deliver targeted information to residents, including Facebook, Instagram, the Village website, and regular email blasts/e-newsletters. Facebook interaction more than doubled between 2022 and 2023.

# Environmental Scan

## Key Takeaways (cont.)

- The Village is in sound financial position but does not currently have good forecasting models for future revenues and expenditures. Intergovernmental revenues (grants) have made up funding gaps where property and sales tax lagged for several years. Years of tight budgets in 2011-2015 have left the Village needing to catch up on purchases including vehicles, heavy equipment, and building maintenance.
- The Community and Economic Development Department faces challenges including poor past record keeping and maintenance, an existing Zoning Ordinance that contains contradictions and errors, and zoning approvals that are not documented by address. Staff is working to correct these issues and planned implementation of the new ERP software will help make key data more accessible.
- The Police Department faces several challenges. Training requirements for Illinois police officers have increased substantially with the passage of the Safe-T Act resulting in increases in both training hours needed and cost for training. Nationally, there is a shrinking pool of qualified police candidates, at the same time as a significant number of officers and supervisors are expected to retire in the next two to three years. The Village has been able to be selective and hire quality candidates, and eligibility lists have been established for future hires.
- Aging infrastructure has impacted all Village departments. For example, the police department, built in 2004, has experienced flooding, significant roof leaking, and an HVAC system in need of updating. The fire stations are 57 and 49 years old and in desperate need of updating.
- The Fire Department currently has three full time vacancies and another coming in May. As with police, there is a national shortage of qualified personnel. 38% of current personnel have been with the department less than 2 years, and 38% of seasoned personnel are eligible to retire in the next 4 years.

# Environmental Scan

## Key Takeaways (cont.)

- The Parks and Recreation Department has received financial support over the last three years from the State and Village taxpayers to build new facilities including a new recreation center. Building maintenance and repairs for existing buildings were not funded in the past and replacement of Parks equipment including vehicles, tractors, and trucks also lagged. A facility assessment is being done and three new vehicles, a new bus and two tractors have been budgeted over the last three years.
- Jefferson pool is 58 years old and in need of a pool liner that will be replaced in the fall of 2024. The new liner should extend the pool shelf life by up to 10 years. Additional upcoming needs include a heater in the Baby Pool, replacement of funbrellas and Lifeguard Chairs.
- The five year capital plan is the Village's plan to try to continually improve infrastructure, buildings and vehicle replacement. The main challenge for the capital plan is that several projects, improvements and vehicles were deferred during lean economic times and additional efforts were not done to bring them back on schedule. This has created a back log of projects that now have seen an increased cost due to inflation and inactivity.
- The 2014 referendum funded \$23 million of road improvements through the Village. Of the 19.5 center lane miles of roadway, the Village has completed 15.2 miles, 4.1 is under engineering design, and 0.3 miles are remaining. The remaining roadway also needs major utility improvements. Funds were approved in the 2017 referendum for the project, in addition to low interest IEPA loans. Inflation and material demand have significantly increased costs as original estimates did not account for the actual cost of inflation. The amount of funds remaining is only \$10.778 million and the remaining projects are now estimated at \$20.27 million, which requires an additional \$9.491 million needed in loans and local funding that was not anticipated at the time of the referendums.

# Focus Group Results

As part of the Village of Villa Park's Strategic Planning Process, Focus Groups were conducted on January 22 and 23, 2024. Participants were employees, local nonprofit personnel, local government representatives, and local businesses, all recruited by Village of Villa Park staff.

A Focus Group is a small-group discussion, guided by a trained facilitator, used to gather in-depth information about a community's thoughts and opinions about a designated topic. The interaction enables participants to ask questions of each other, as well as to re-evaluate and reconsider their own understandings of their specific experiences.

The facilitator's role is to gather information in an impartial and confidential manner, manage the pace of the discussion, and ensure that everyone has a chance to participate. The process included a set of questions and follow-up discussion within the small group.

## Key Takeaways

- Villa Park is described as a "Best Kept Secret", with easy access to Chicago and the airport as well as Schaumburg and Naperville. It is a friendly community with a small-town feel to it where residents come together in support of others and there are amenities such as the Prairie Path.
- Focus groups would like a variety of businesses in Villa Park and note the age of some buildings can impact current property conditions and the investment needed to bring a business property up to date. While the business focus group described the business community as strong, in general the focus groups regarded business retention as an issue.
- Housing in Villa Park is attractive because of tree-lined streets, and well-maintained owner-occupied properties. Affordable housing and lower property taxes than other communities lead to "more for your money" in Villa Park. Lack of senior living facilities is a concern and there was discussion of the lack of progress of the Garden Station development. The condition of some rental properties was seen as a concern.
- Police and fire are seen as providing excellent services and fall leaf pick up and free mulch are appreciated. Permit and approval processes could be clearer and better communication about project status from the Village would be appreciated. Some ordinances seem restrictive, and the permitting process could be more collaborative and informative.
- The sidewalks and roads need improvement, and there are concerns about sewer pipes. Flooding and general waterflow are issues in some areas of the community. A bypass, overpass, or underpass was discussed at length as the number of trains and corresponding delays are seen as getting worse.
- A centralized business district or true "downtown" is desirable.
- The demographics of the community are changing, and Villa Park is unique in the area because of the cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic diversity. This diversity is seen as a strength for the community.

# Internal Stakeholder Survey Results

A survey of internal stakeholders was conducted January 23rd through February 6th, 2024, as part of the strategic planning process. Internal stakeholders are individuals or groups who are within the organization by virtue of being elected to or employed/appointed by the organization. They are essential to the successful implementation of the strategic plan, so their input is ideally incorporated into the process. Additionally, they often have key information based upon their interaction with the community and can identify emerging community themes

## Key Takeaways

- Respondents were employees (67%) and commission members (33%).
- Respondents identified the following as the four highest priorities for the Village of Villa Park: Public safety (79%), Infrastructure (72%), Economic development (67%), and Financial sustainability (62%).
- When asked what city services need improvement, community and economic development came up often in open text responses, along with permitting, staffing and opportunities for overall improvement in all departments.
- 63% of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement “Villa Park operates with openness and transparency” while 22% somewhat or strongly disagreed. 58% of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement “Villa Park does a good job of communicating with residents” while 23% somewhat or strongly disagreed. 50% somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement “Villa Park is open to new ideas and ways of doing things” while 29% somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement.
- When asked what Villa Park does really well, supporting a great community atmosphere and holding community events were most often mentioned.
- When asked what improvement could have the greatest positive impact on quality of life in Villa Park, there were many comments about business development, economic development, and an active downtown area.
- When asked if they would recommend Villa Park as a place to live, respondents overwhelming said “Yes”.

# External Stakeholder (Community) Survey Results

An External Stakeholder (Community) Survey was conducted January 3rd through February 4th, 2024. External Stakeholders refers to individuals or groups who are outside the organization but are affected by the actions of the organization and the quality of life in the community. These include, but are not limited to, businesses, neighborhoods, residents of all ages, historically excluded populations, special interest groups, educational facilities including K-12 schools and higher ed, and other taxing jurisdictions.

## Key Takeaways

- The survey had 914 responses, with 98% indicating they are a resident of Villa Park, 7% said they work in Villa Park, 4% said they are a business owner in Villa Park, and 4% own property other than their home in Villa Park.
- When asked what they liked best about living in Villa Park, the top three answers were Location, Peaceful community, and Affordability/cost of living.
- Respondents indicated that the four most important for quality of life in Villa Park are Police/public safety (84%), Fire/emergency medical response (82%), Affordability/cost of living (71%), and Neighborhood appearance (65%).
- More than 35% of respondents said that they were very satisfied with the following services/features in Villa Park: Fire/emergency medical response (55%), Police/public safety (54%), Drinking water (40%), Quality of life (38%), Trash/recycling/yard waste collection (35%).
- More than 20% of respondents indicated that they were somewhat dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the following services/features in Villa Park: Condition of Village sidewalks (54%), Condition of Village streets (46%), Arts and cultural opportunities (28%), neighborhood appearance (21%) and Parks and park facilities (21%).
- When asked the most important things for a strong and healthy community the top four responses were a sense of safety and security, high-quality schools, high quality services, and well-maintained residential and commercial properties.
- The following were deemed “essential” to the future of Villa Park: A safe community (90%), A good place to raise a family (80%), Affordable Village services (73%), A well-maintained community (68%), and high-quality schools (67%)

# Understanding the Environment

An integral part of the Strategic Planning Process is a SWOT Analysis, which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It provides a situational overview of the environment in which strategic planning takes place and allows a systematic examination of factors impacting the community. **Strengths and Weaknesses** examine the internal operating environment, while **Opportunities and Threats** evaluate the external operating environment.

To provide ample opportunity for reflection, a SWOT survey was distributed to the Board Members and staff prior to the Strategic Planning session. During the Strategic Planning Retreat, the SWOT data was reviewed to determine key themes and strategic issues.



# SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Healthy finances</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Improved customer service</li> <li>• Improved Infrastructure and Equipment</li> <li>• Public Safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging Public Buildings</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Financial Resources</li> <li>• Lack of Implementation of Goals</li> <li>• Staffing Challenges</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for economic &amp; residential development</li> <li>• Collaboration with neighboring communities</li> <li>• Building of trust</li> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• More willing to accept change</li> <li>• Staffing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of federal/state funding and unfunded mandates</li> <li>• Pension payments</li> <li>• Lack of community buy-in/civic engagement</li> <li>• Staff wellbeing</li> <li>• Lack of sales tax generators</li> <li>• Changing national/global economic conditions</li> </ul>

The **Strengths and Opportunities** groups combined to discuss how internal strength coupled with external opportunities could be enablers of success.

The **Weaknesses and Threats** groups combined to discuss how internal weaknesses coupled with external threats could be challenges to success.

Finally, the groups combined, and all participants reviewed the key themes. A list of strategic issues was determined, and included economics, staffing, aging Infrastructure, technology Improvements. community engagement. development/redevelopment, and trust (internal and external).

Finally, the most important organizational priorities were finalized taking into account information gathered throughout the process, including the Environmental Scan.

Through this analysis, four Strategic Goals were identified: Financial Resilience, Sustainable Infrastructure, Community Engagement, and Workforce Development.

Participants then were divided into cross-functional groups. They determined desired Outcomes (what success looks like), Key Outcome Indicators (how to measure progress towards success), and Performance Targets (a measurable goal achieved by a defined date) for each strategic priority.

# Targets by Strategic Goal

STRATEGIC GOAL	OUTCOME	KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR	TARGET
Financial Resilience	Increased Residential Development	# of residential permits that expand square footage on the lot New Build Residential EAV	≥__# of residential building permits that expand square footage by 6/28 ( <i>Baseline set year 1</i> ) Permit approval or next steps communicated within two weeks of application 95% of the time by 6/25 ≥10% in New Build Residential EAV by 12/27 40,000 additional sq. ft. of residential space under roof by June 2028
	Increased Commercial Development	Vacancy rates \$ Sales tax revenue \$ EAV new builds	≤___% of vacancy rates by 12/27 ( <i>Target set by 2/25</i> ) ≤___% business retention rates by 12/27 ( <i>Target set by 12/25</i> )
	Increased Operational Efficiency	# of core processes reviewed \$ saved	≤2% annual increase in sales tax revenue EAV increase of 10% of value in new builds by 12/27 1 core process evaluated annually Material & supply expenditure increases below CPI annually
Sustainable Infrastructure	2014 Referendum Projects Completed Including Sewer Separation	# of projects completed # of projects designed	100% of Referendum Projects designed by 12/27 95% of Referendum Projects Completed by 6/28
	Improved Village-Owned Assets and Fleet	# of projects in Kluber Building Assessment Plan complete # of vehicles replaced	90% of Priority 1 building projects in the Kluber Study completed by 12/26 30 vehicles replaced by 12/28
	Improved Transportation Network	# square feet of sidewalk replaced Road PCI condition	100% of sidewalks defined as trip hazards in the Sidewalk Improvement Plan replaced by 12/27 85% of roads with PCI of 3 or higher by 12/27
Community Engagement	Community Bridges Built	# community leader meetings annually # Village volunteers	≥2 meetings annually with each identified community leader ≥10% increase in Village volunteers by 6/27
	A Well-Informed Community	% of positive survey results # of clicks on website # of clicks on newsletter links	51% residents who respond they are "well-informed" by 12/26 Increase by > 20% newsletter links clicked by 12/27 Increase by > 20% website visits by 12/27
	Transparent Government	% of respondents who say they trust the Village # of strategic plan updates annually Financial information shared	≥51% of respondents say they trust the Village by 2028 Strategic Plan updates viewable online quarterly Popular Annual Financial Report shared annually by 12/25
Workforce Development	Staff Capacity to Meet Service Demands	# of departments with staffing needs evaluate	Staffing needs of 2 departments evaluated annually
	Satisfied and Engaged Workforce	% of employee referrals for open Village positions Employee turnover rates Employee satisfaction survey results Employee years of service in Village	≥20% increase in employee satisfaction by 12/27 ≥10% of employee referrals for open positions by 12/26 ≤50% employee turnover rates annually as compared to industry standards
	Future Staffing Needs Managed	# of critical roles assessed	Needs understood for 50% of critical roles by 12/28

# Strategic Plan Implementation

Implementation is the final step in the Strategic Planning Process and consists of staff developing Initiatives to support the Strategic Goals determined during the Strategic Planning Process. The following Initiatives will be reported on regularly, showing the measurable progress the Village of Villa Park is making towards their Strategic Goals and associated Performance Targets.

## Financial Resilience

- Develop Streamlined Permit Application and Review Process
- Develop Business Growth and Retention Strategy
- Website Optimized for Permit Applications
- Core Process Improvement Plan developed
- Create a Cost Containment Plan for Materials and Supplies
- Update and Adopt Financial Ratios based on GFOA Standards
- Develop a Quarterly Financial Report

## Sustainable Infrastructure

- Create a Facilities Usage Plan
- Develop a Sidewalk Improvement Plan
- Develop a 2014 Referendum Project Plan
- Create a Long-Term Vehicle Replacement Plan
- Develop a Street Pavement Improvement Plan

## Community Engagement

- Create Community Leader Engagement Plan
- Develop a Comprehensive Community Information Strategy
- Complete a Trust needs assessment
- Develop a Trust Improvement Strategy
- Develop a Public-Facing Popular Annual Financial Report module

## Workforce Development

- Conduct a Staffing and Efficiency Analysis for every department
- Develop an Annual Workplace Survey Strategy
- Complete an Organizational Retention Analysis
- Develop an Organizational Succession Plan
- Develop a Leadership Skills Development Strategy
- Create an Employee Referral Program
- Comprehensive Review of Compensation and Non-Compensation Benefits



# Strategic Plan Participants

The strategic plan was developed with the hard work and dedication of many individuals. The Village of Villa Park Board and Staff led the way, taking time out of their schedules to commit to long-term thinking. They defined a direction and a set of outcomes that are important to the community stakeholders with whom they partner and serve.

## Board of Trustees

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Rich Salerno

### Consultant

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