
VILLAGE OF OSWEGO, ILLINOIS STRATEGIC PLAN

January 2017

CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
DEKALB, ILLINOIS 60115



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**Center for
Governmental Studies**

Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies



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January 31, 2017

Village of Oswego
100 Parkers Mill
Oswego, IL 60543

RE: 2017-2020 Strategic Plan- Village of Oswego

Dear Village President Johnson,

On behalf of the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University, I am pleased to present this 2017-2020 Strategic Plan and Summary Report to The Village of Oswego.

The plan reflects the organization's commitment to strategic planning, and to delivering measurable results. I appreciate the dedicated effort put forth by you, the Board of Trustees, and senior staff.

I also want to thank Village Administrator Daniel Di Santo and Assistant Village Administrator Christina Burns for their assistance and support during the process.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig R. Rapp'.

Craig R. Rapp
Senior Associate
President, Craig Rapp LLC

Executive Summary

The Village of Oswego engaged in a strategic planning process over three sessions on November 29, December 20, 2016, and January 6, 2017. The sessions yielded a draft strategic plan for the three-year period 2017-2020.

The strategic plan consists of five *strategic priorities*, which are the highest priority issues for the next three years; a series of *desired outcomes*, which provide a vision of success, *key outcome indicators*, which will be monitored to determine success; and a set of *performance targets*, which define the successful outcome.

The Board and senior staff engaged in two major efforts to examine their operations, and the needs and expectations of their customers. The first, an environmental scan, conducted by staff, examined the current conditions of Village operations and the external influences affecting those operations. The second was a strategic planning retreat held over two meetings—November 29 and December 20, 2016.

On November 29, the leadership team began the process of developing the strategic plan. The group reviewed the environmental scan, and examined the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis). They identified the major challenges facing the Village.

On December 20, based upon the challenges facing the community, the group adopted a set of five strategic priorities. They then developed a set of desired outcomes, key indicators and performance targets for each priority, which established the desired performance for the next three years.

On January 6, the senior management team met and developed a set of strategic initiatives. The initiatives are the projects and programs that will be necessary to achieve the outcomes identified.

The Village Board reviewed the revised plan at its January 17 Committee of the Whole Meeting, providing final input. The Strategic Plan was adopted at the February 7 Regular Village Board Meeting.

The strategic priorities, key outcome indicators, targets and initiatives are summarized on the following page.

Village of Oswego - Strategic Plan 2017-2020

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Oswego will continue to be a friendly, caring, and forward-thinking community that provides a high quality of life based upon sustainable growth and a respect for our rich heritage and environment

Mission

It is our mission to responsibly grow our community and maintain the public's trust. We do this through the innovative and collaborative delivery of public services that meet the community's quality of life expectations.

Values

Integrity: We are honest, ethical and we honor our commitments.

Accountability: We take responsibility for our actions, and are transparent in the fulfillment of our public duties

Innovative: We value creative thinking and problem solving in our service to the public

Pride in work performed: We value a commitment to excellence and pride in the performance of our work

Community: We believe in contributing to something greater than ourselves

Village of Oswego - Strategic Plan Summary 2017-2020

Strategic Priority	Desired Outcome	Key Outcome Indicator (KOI's)	Target	Strategic Initiatives
Financial Sustainability FINANCE	Meet our fund balance policy in General Fund	Fiscal year fund balance-General Fund	Revenues exceed expenditures in the General Fund	a) Conduct analyses-megaprojects b) Create a revenue strategy c) Analyze programs for cost-effectiveness *focus on public engagement
	Reduced reliance on sales tax	Revenue sources	Sales tax reduced by ___% of total revenue	
	Clarity on mega projects	Financial analyses	Funding options identified for megaprojects by ___	
Infrastructure Maintenance and Expansion OPERATIONS	Sustainable water source	-Analyses -Project schedules	Sustainable water source connected in 2026	a) Water source decision process b) Water plan implementation c) Master plan –Wolf’s Crossing d) Funding strategy-Wolf’s Crossing e) Funding strategy-CIP f) Phase I- Metra study g) Metra lobbying strategy
	Safe and efficient Wolf’s Crossing	-Analyses -Milestones, plan	Secure funding -\$14M for Section 1 by 2020	
	Metra service to Oswego	CMAP plan project schedule	Oswego is a high priority project by 2018	
	Safe and efficient infrastructure	Maintenance plan	CIP funding in place to meet current needs	
Community Engagement CUSTOMER	Recognized as a regional destination	RPP implementation schedule	- ___% increase in online visits - ___% increase in H/MT	a) Complete and Implement Regional Positioning Plan b) Implement tourism plan c) Develop marketing plan-Village services d) Create internal service response to citizen feedback e) Conduct community survey f) Marketing and promotion program for community events *focus on metrics
	Positive public perception of services	Village survey, citizen feedback	___% increase in public satisfaction with services	
	Well-attended events that enhance connectedness	-Attendance -Community survey results	- ___% increase in attendance /yr. - ___% report feeling connected	
Effective Growth and Development GROWTH	Expanded downtown	Redevelopment Agreements	- =/>Two ground-breakings by July 2019 in TIF District - % increase in TIF	a) 59 S. Adams St. project plan b) Old Village Hall Block plan c) TIF District marketing plan d) Residential development strategy e) Economic development strategic plan
	Growth in residential units	-Existing & new developments	=/> 100 new residential units under permit/year	
	Expand commercial investment	-Building permits -EAV	New commercial investment of \$___/ year	
Productive and Engaged Workforce WORKFORCE	Staff sized to meet growing community’s needs	Workload indicators	Develop a long-term projection for service delivery and staffing	a) ERP implementation-establish best practices-operating processes b) Shared services initiative c) Create leadership development program d) Conduct employee survey e) Connect strategic plan to evaluation system
	Highly qualified workforce	Internal hiring rate	50% or > of non-entry level positions filled from	
	Empowered employees	Opinions/employee feedback	___% or > report feeling empowered, supported	
	Accountable organization	-Results achieved, bonuses, surveys	--% goals achieved	

* Some targets are blank intentionally, to enable development of baseline measures

Village of Oswego Strategic Planning Process

Strategic planning is a process that helps leaders examine the current state of the organization, determine a future course, establish priorities, and define a set of actions to achieve desired outcomes. The process followed by the Village of Oswego was designed to answer four key questions: (1) Where are we now? (2) Where are we going? (3) How will we get there? and (4) What will we do?

Environmental Scan—Assessing the Current Environment

To begin the strategic planning process, the senior staff conducted an environmental scan, which is a review of elements in the external and internal environments that impact performance. Included in the scan was a detailed review and summary of finance, operations, staffing, facilities and equipment. The scan revealed the most difficult challenges facing the Village overall, as well as in each of the departments. The scan was presented to the Village Board, and used as foundation and background for the strategic planning retreat.

Strategic Plan Development—Reviewing the Environment, Setting Priorities

On November 29, 2016, the leadership team—the Board of Trustees and senior staff—held the first of two meetings to develop a strategic plan. As part of the exploration of “Where are we now?” the group was challenged to define the current organizational culture and its value proposition—understanding that an organization’s culture, and the value proposition it puts forth provide the foundation for the way in which services are delivered and strategic direction is set.

The group engaged in an extended discussion regarding the value proposition and its relationship to the culture. While there were a variety of different perceptions regarding the value proposition, it was generally believed that customer intimacy reflects much of the current approach, however, operational excellence is important and will continue to be important for operational stability, therefore it should be the primary value proposition, with customer intimacy as a secondary focus.

The team then conducted a brief review of their Mission, Vision and Values statements. The team felt that each needed slight adjustments to reflect current reality, and they worked on new ideas for each. They brainstormed key concepts, which were used to create draft statements. The proposed statements, along with the originals, are listed below:

Mission Statement (2012-2017 Strategic Plan):

The Village of Oswego provides a vibrant, sustainable community, rich in heritage, prosperity and genuine partnership, for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Brainstormed Mission Statement concepts: Partnership, collaboration, responsibly grow the community, preserving heritage, enhancing qualities of life, growing together, being innovative, building confidence, creative, imaginative, public trust

Mission Statement (draft):

It is our mission to responsibly grow our community, and maintain the public's trust. We do this through the innovative and collaborative delivery of public services that meet the community's quality of life expectations.

Vision Statement (2012-2017 Strategic Plan):

Governance and Municipal Services

Elected officials and staff partner effectively to guide and serve our community

Prospering Economy

Innovative industrial, professional and commercial growth advances and sustains our economic vitality

Community Enrichment

Quality development and use of public and private space, culture and entertainment make Oswego a sought-after destination

Environmental Sensibility

Plans, decisions and practices are environmentally conscious and honor the natural environment

Culture of Partnership

People eagerly participate in community life and enjoy creating a Village that works for all

Strategic Infrastructure

Highly effective public facilities and modes of transportation keep pace with community needs

Brainstormed Vision Statement concepts: Enlightened, friendly, engaged, thriving, diverse, successful, collaboration, responsible, sustainable, safe, caring people, respectful, curious, forward-thinking, tradition, heritage, vibrant, stewardship, playful, neighborly, optimistic, connected

Vision Statement (draft):

"We envision Oswego to be a friendly, caring, and forward-thinking community that provides a high quality of life based upon sustainable growth and a respect for our rich heritage."

Values (2012-2017 Strategic Plan):

In Oswego, we:

- Demonstrate integrity, respect and goodwill
- Focus on the well-being of the whole community
- Are open-minded and listen well to the ideas, beliefs and opinions of others
- Trust that the intentions of others are good
- Are accountable, transparent and fiscally responsible
- Serve with dedication and unwavering commitment

Brainstormed Values: Integrity/ethical, accountability, collaboration, creativity, innovative, engaged, pride in work, passion, community-commitment to something greater than ourselves, results-oriented, loyalty, public service

Values (draft):

Integrity

We are honest, ethical and we honor our commitments.

Accountability

We take responsibility for our actions, and are transparent in the fulfillment of our public duties

Innovative

We value creative problem-solving and original thinking in our service to the public

Pride in work performed

We value a commitment to excellence and pride in the performance of our work

Community

We believe in contributing to something greater than ourselves

SWOT Analysis

Following the mission, vision and values discussion, the group assessed the Village's operating environment. This was done via a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis—a process that examines the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats in the external environment. To facilitate this, a SWOT questionnaire was distributed to all participants in advance of the planning session. The results of the questionnaire revealed the most frequently mentioned characteristics in each area:

STRENGTHS

- Collaboration (internally/externally), Leadership (unified Board/strong management), Financial Stability, forward thinking culture--professional development, CIP, ERP

WEAKNESSES

- Staffing is stretched thin (high-level projects), employee recruitment/retention, communication, staff engagement, wage dissatisfaction, succession planning, staff afraid to take risks

OPPORTUNITIES

- Growth/development—residential, commercial, downtown, infrastructure—Metra, Wolf's Crossing, natural resources—environmental conservation, Fox River, demographics

THREATS

- Taxes, Springfield issues, transportation (lack of), growth-stagnation, water

The group engaged in an exercise using the summarized SWOT data. They compared strengths with opportunities and weaknesses with threats, to determine which opportunities would

maximize strengths, and which weaknesses would be exacerbated by the threats. This crystallized the current challenges and opportunities facing the community. The results are listed below:

STRENGTHS-OPPORTUNITIES

(Make good things happen)

- Forward thinking-culture
- Leadership
- Financial stability
- Collaboration
- Infrastructure
- Natural resources

WEAKNESSES-THREATS

(Keep bad things from happening)

- Staffing stretched too thin/growth stagnation—serving future growth, planning for growth
- Taxes/wages/Springfield
- Transportation/recruitment

A discussion ensued regarding the two lists. A broad set of issues and challenges facing the Village emerged:

ISSUES/CHALLENGES

- Growth and development
- Infrastructure – building and paying for it
- Natural resources
- Staffing
- Communications—risk taking
- Recruitment
- Springfield/State
- Tax burden
- Demographic changes—challenges of diversity—embracing and welcoming
- Engagement-community
- Revenue/financial sustainability

The group agreed that to successfully address these challenges, they would need to focus and prioritize their efforts. From that discussion, a set of six Strategic Priorities emerged:

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Financial Sustainability
2. Infrastructure—Maintenance and Expansion

3. Community Engagement
4. Effective Growth and Development
5. Productive and Engaged Workforce

Defining the Strategic Priorities

To clarify the meaning of each priority in the context of The Village of Oswego, the group identified key concepts for each. These will be used to develop final definitions.

Financial Sustainability

Pensions, diversification of revenues, sustainable revenue sources, high reliance on sales tax, Springfield issues, fee structures, financing for mega projects

Infrastructure—Maintenance and Expansion

Underground—streets, sewer, water, storm sewer, mass transit, facilities, streetscape, capital equipment-rolling stock, appropriate/timely expansion, adequate funding

Community Engagement

Greater involvement/caring, regional positioning, bond with new community, conversation—not dialogue, welcoming and engaging all groups and segments (marginalized), customer service/problem solving practices

Effective Growth and Development

Residential development, commercial growth, meets needs, downtown redevelopment, environmentally responsible

Productive and Engaged Workforce

Recruitment, retention, training, capable of meeting changing needs, succession planning/leadership training, managing outsourced services, appropriate staffing ratios, continuous improvement, competitive compensation

Determining Success: Defining the Desired Outcomes, Indicators, Targets

On December 20, the group defined a set of desired outcomes for each strategic priority. Once the outcomes were established, Key Outcome Indicators (KOI's) were identified and Performance Targets were developed. KOI's are measures that will be tracked to reveal progress toward the desired outcomes. Performance Targets define successful outcomes, expressed in measureable terms.

The alignment created between Strategic Priorities, Outcomes, KOI's, and Targets is important, not only for clarity, but also for maintaining a disciplined focus on the desired results.

Implementing the Vision: Developing Strategic Initiatives and Action Plans

To successfully address the strategic priorities and achieve the intended outcomes expressed in the Targets, it is necessary to have a focused set of actions, including detailed implementation steps to guide organizational effort. The Village of Oswego will accomplish this through strategic initiatives developed for each priority. Strategic initiatives are broadly described, but narrowly focused activities that are aligned with the priorities, and targeted to the achievement of outcomes expressed in the Targets.

Strategic Planning Participants

The strategic plan was developed with the hard work and dedication of many individuals. The Board, elected officials and senior staff worked collaboratively, defining a direction and a set of outcomes that are important to the Village. The entire group spent time engaged in new ways of thinking to come up with a set of plans that will help the Village successfully measure and achieve the outcomes they defined.

Board of Trustees

President

Gail Johnson

Trustees

Ryan Kauffman

Karin McCarthy

Pam Parr

Luiz Perez

Judy Sollinger

Joe West

Senior Management Team

Village Administrator

Daniel Di Santo

Assistant Village Administrator

Christina Burns

Community Development Director

Rod Zenner

Community Relations Manager

Michele Brown

Building and Zoning Manager

Jay Hoover

Finance Director

Mark Horton

GIS/IT Coordinator

Joe Renzetti

Police Chief

Jeff Burgner

Public Works Director/PE

Jennifer Hughes

Village Clerk

Tina Touchette

Economic Development Director

Corinna Cole