

Executive Summary



Village of Niles

Strategic Plan and Goal Development Update/Realignment 2021

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Center for
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Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development



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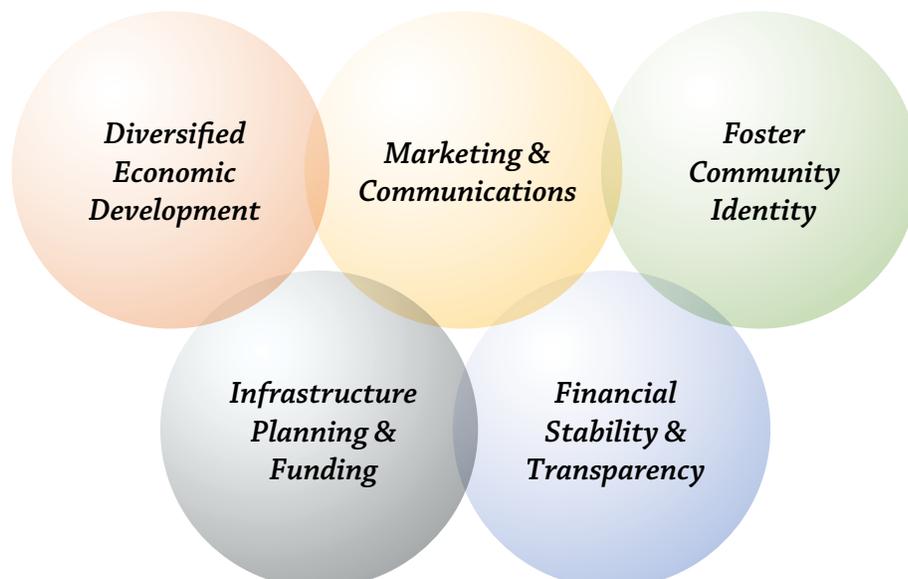
Strategic planning helps to guide an organization’s future better than making decisions issue by issue. The Village of Niles (“the Village”) engaged the Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) at Northern Illinois University (NIU) to facilitate a strategic planning update/realignment workshop with Board and senior staff members in October of 2021 to review and update the Village’s strategic plan. The 2021 strategic planning workshop provided a positive atmosphere for the Board and senior staff members to revisit the accomplishments and priorities from the previous plan, work together to collaboratively review and update the Board’s visions for the future, and develop new or revised strategic goals to determine where the Village wants to go as an organization in the next few years.

Strategic Goals

After a series of environmental scanning discussions regarding the Village’s visions for the future, significant and anticipated changes within the different departments/functions, past accomplishments, and a review of the Village’s current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, participants were asked to review and revise the Village’s short- and long-term goals. After an updated list of goals was developed, participants were then 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 (please see full report for defined criteria). For a full review of all the strategic goals and priority levels, please refer to the full report.

Strategic Priorities

The key strategic priority areas identified as an outcome of the strategic planning process were carried over from 2020 to the 2021 Strategic Plan. The strategic priority areas identified during the process (in no particular order) are illustrated below along with a brief explanation of each priority area.



Diversified Economic Development

Economic development is a vital tool in creating a thriving community and enhancing revenue streams. This is especially important for the Village of Niles, which depends heavily on a diverse sales tax base and much less on property taxes as compared to surrounding municipalities. It is important for the Village to identify diversified development and redevelopment opportunities to support the Village's financial stability and add to the quality of life for all community members and visitors. No matter the size of the development, follow-through and completion of projects will be critical.

Infrastructure Planning and Funding

Physical infrastructure is the building block of any community. It is critical to plan for, and adequately fund, infrastructure improvement projects to ensure sustainability, high-quality delivery of core services, and improved quality of life. In an ever-changing world where technology allows people more options for where they work and live, meeting the needs and expectations of potential and current residents and businesses is even more important.

Marketing and Communication

It is important that the Village of Niles markets and communicates its unique character, variety of service offerings, and community assets to attract and retain residents, businesses, and visitors. Through marketing and high-level engagement efforts, Niles can demonstrate its value in building a sense of community and belonging for all community members, which will help set it apart from other surrounding communities.

Foster Community Identity

The Village of Niles prides itself on being a place a diverse population of residents and businesses call home. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential elements in creating a community where everyone feels welcomed. Adding to the quality of life, the Village strives towards promoting and supporting arts and culture as well as creating physical and digital gathering spaces to break down barriers and develop a sense of connected and engaged community.

Financial Stability and Transparency

Maintaining fiscal strength and stability is key for any organization, public or private. Routinely undertaking financial assessments to understand the Village's current financial profile, recognize changing trends, and identify opportunities for revenue enhancements and/or cost-cutting measures is vital to give elected officials a high level of confidence to make tough decisions. This type of financial stewardship will allow the high level of service that Niles is known for to continue.