



2025-2028
STRATEGIC
PLANNING
& GOAL
DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

Approved by the Village Board on April 21, 2025

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Village President

Jeff Lynam

Village Clerk

Katherine Diehl

Village Board of Trustees

Sarah Brittin
Scott Kunze
Kathleen Mahony
Andy Sauder
Tricia Saviano
Rich Treiber

Process facilitated by Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies

Mel Henriksen, MPP
Assistant Director
Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies

Alli Hoebing, MPA
Research Specialist
Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies



Village Administrative Leadership

Erika Storlie, Village Administrator
Franco Bottalico, Assistant to the Village Administrator
Brandiss West, Finance and Administrative Services Director
Joshua Fourdyce, Chief of Police
Andrew Ritter, Deputy Police Chief
Chris Ranieri, Building Inspector
Gregg Goetz, Public Works Superintendent of Operations
Ana Lopez, Finance Manager
Phil Cotter, Public Works Director
Caleb Haydock, Management Analyst

Village Community and Stakeholders

The Village would also like to thank all the community members who participated in the stakeholder feedback phase of the process. An effective strategic plan includes feedback from stakeholders to ensure that needs and expectations are shared and understood by leaders of the organization.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	1
Introduction	2
Pre-Workshop: Environmental Scanning and Stakeholder Input	3
Leadership Workshop: Exercises & Discussions Sessions	4
Leadership Workshop: Environmental Scanning, Part 1	6
Leadership Workshop: Environmental Scanning, Part 2	6
Post-Workshop: Strategic Goal Ranking & Prioritization	7
Strategy Priority Areas	9
Conclusion	10
Appendix	
A: Focus Group and Leadership Interview Feedback	A2
B: Surrender or Lead Exercise	A6
C: Strategic Priority Area Goal and Stakeholder Feedback Alignment	A7



This page intentionally left blank.



VILLAGE OF EAST DUNDEE

BACKGROUND

The Village of East Dundee is a Village in Kane County with a small section in Cook County. The population was 3,152 at the 2020 census. The Village of East Dundee is a home rule municipality governed by a President-Trustee form of government consisting of seven members. The President and six Trustees are elected at large from the Village in staggered four year terms. The Village Administrator is appointed by the Village President and Board of Trustees and serves as the Chief Administrative Officer for the Village's day-to-day operations.¹

The Village was incorporated in 1871. A historic district along the Fox River and stores on Main Street constitute the commercial part of East Dundee. The historic feed and coal store became Dundee Lumber, which burned down in March 2007. A former railroad bed is now the Fox River Trail, which follows the east side of the Fox River through town. The train depot was rebuilt in 1984 as a tourist center. Santa's Village theme park operated in East Dundee from 1959 to 2006 and reopened in 2011 under new ownership as Santa's Village AZoosment Park.²

The Village and residents of East Dundee hosts many events on the east side of the Fox River in downtown East Dundee. Most events take place at The Depot, 319 N River Street. Village Community Events include the annual Oktoberfest, Dickens in Dundee, Thirsty Thursday Street Fest, Wine Down Wednesday, Motor Monday Cruise Night, St. Patrick's Day Events, Concerts in the Park and Shredding Event.³

¹ <https://www.eastdundee.net>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Dundee,_Illinois

³ https://www.eastdundee.net/things_to_do/village_community_events/index.php



INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is an effective way to identify and confirm an organization’s vision for the future and set organizational purpose and direction by incorporating clear priorities and measurable goals. To this end, the Village of East Dundee (the “Village”) engaged the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies (NIU-CGS) in December 2023 to facilitate its strategic planning process (Figure 1). The value of such processes continues to be recognized by policy-making boards, councils, and executive staff in both private and public organizations.

The Village also concurrently updated its comprehensive land use plan. Updating both plans simultaneously enabled the Village to utilize information and data interchangeably and generate a more complete guide for the Village and its stakeholders. Coordinating the two processes is widely acknowledged as best practice for planning and decision making and further enhances the Village’s ability to grow as it desires.

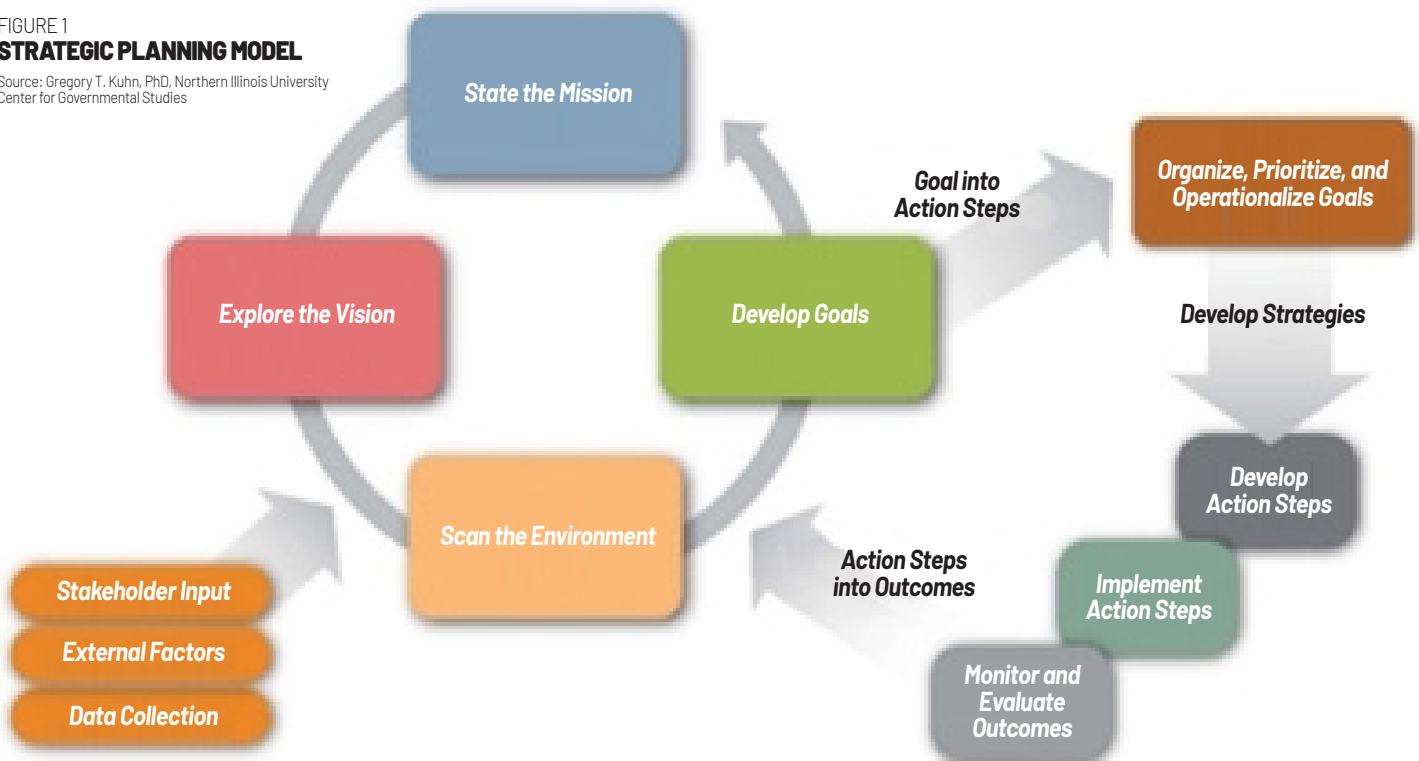
From June through August 2024, the NIU-CGS team gathered internal and external stakeholder input that was shared at the strategic planning leadership workshop held in September 2024. The workshop provided an opportunity for elected officials and administrative leadership to discuss a future vision for the Village and establish short- and long-term goals. It also provided a positive atmosphere where workshop participants could discuss the best ways to serve the organization and the broader community in the coming years.

It is important to keep in mind that the judicious use of the Village’s limited resources (including financial resources and professional staff time) is key to achieving good results. Only a limited number of goals and objectives can be managed and implemented effectively 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.



FIGURE 1
STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL

Source: Gregory T. Kuhn, PhD, Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies



ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING & STAKEHOLDER INPUT

PRE-WORKSHOP PHASE

The Village’s leadership recognized the importance of gaining a comprehensive understanding of their organization and the broader community they serve by gathering input from various stakeholders during the environmental scanning phase of the strategic planning process. This phase focused on analyzing key factors that guide the Village’s priorities and initiatives. To accomplish this, the NIU-CGS team conducted focus groups and interviews involving external and internal stakeholders. In addition, as part of the development of the comprehensive land use plan, NIU-CGS staff disseminated and analyzed community and business surveys and conducted a workshop with the Village’s Planning and Zoning and Historic Commission. Final survey results can be found in the Village’s comprehensive land use plan and preliminary results were shared as an overview at the strategic planning leadership workshop.

EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

Incorporating external perspectives into the Village’s strategic plan helps capture the diverse needs and aspirations of the community, ensuring the plan is responsive to the concerns of residents and stakeholders. This approach fosters greater public trust and engagement, leading to more effective and sustainable outcomes. To that end, the NIU-CGS team conducted three in-person focus groups. Detailed summaries are provided in [Appendix A](#). Focus groups are designed to be a highly interactive approach, allowing for a robust and informative conversation with and between participants.

FOCUS GROUPS



In late June, three focus groups were conducted in person with the Village’s external stakeholders. The number of participants in each group (as outlined below) ranged from 4-17.

- **Business Community**
- **Civic Organizations and Intergovernmental Agencies**
- **Cross-section of Residents**

INTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

Gathering internal perspectives when developing the Village’s strategic plan is crucial, as it ensures the plan is informed by the insights and experiences of those who best understand East Dundee’s unique operations and challenges. This comprehensive input fosters a more effective and inclusive strategy, aligning with the community’s needs and goals. The NIU-CGS team conducted interviews with the Village’s leadership team and elected officials as well as facilitated an in-person focus group with staff. Detailed summaries are provided in [Appendix A](#).

FOCUS GROUPS



In late June, a focus group was conducted in person with Village staff. The number of participants included 17 staff members across all departments.

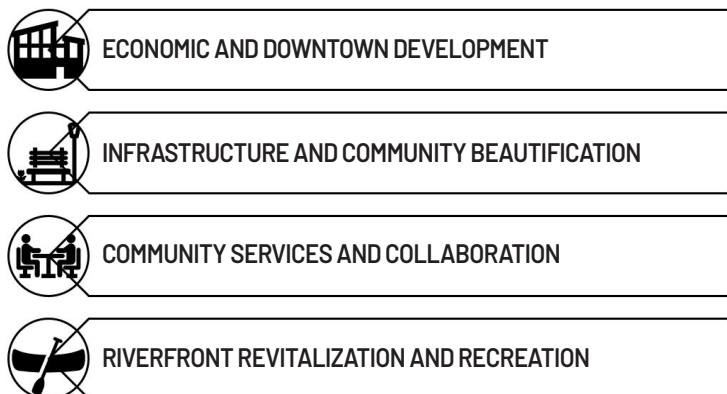
INTERVIEWS



Interviews result in highly personalized participation and the in-depth sharing of ideas. The focus of the interview sessions is to gain an initial perspective by building a balanced and informed view of the Village from each stakeholder’s unique vantage point. A key summary of the key themes from the interviews can be found in [Appendix A](#).

FIGURE 2
STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Alignment of all stakeholder feedback (focus groups and interviews)



EXERCISES & DISCUSSION SESSIONS

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

All discussion sessions in the planning effort employed highly participative and interactive approaches. The workshop facilitators utilized a group discussion approach called 'Nominal Group Technique' where the facilitator assures participants equal opportunities to speak and share opinions. During the workshop discussions, individuals had the opportunity to generate and share their ideas, as well as participate in small and large 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 direction, goals, and priorities.

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP:
INTRODUCTIONS &
ICEBREAKER EXERCISE

Participants were asked to introduce themselves and share how long they have been involved with the Village. Next, they engaged in an icebreaker exercise titled, "Garage Sale." Workshop participants collected an item from a "garage sale" table that represented to them an idea, issue, or topic that they felt was important to the Village's future and should be discussed as part of the strategic plan. This was a brainstorming exercise, and no evaluative or judgmental debate was permitted during this session. Next is a list of those answers (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3
GARAGE SALE ICEBREAKER

IMPORTANT ISSUE, INITIATIVE, OR IDEA THAT SHOULD BE PART OF THE VILLAGE'S FUTURE

Garage Sale Item	Important issue, initiative, or idea that should be part of the Village's future
Fish	River recreation, attraction, river is an asset, positive - Community downtown or riverfront, make Village a walkable community, focus on connectivity, draw more people to Village
Duck	Make the riverfront a destination - River is underutilized, take advantage of this asset
Bricks	Growing economic development is important, people love what Village has to offer
Hard hat	Opportunity, developments, waterfront plan, exciting things happening
Hard hat 2	Lots of development and change happening in last 10 years, progress, growth
Light bulb	Hope to have a more aesthetically appealing downtown by burying wires to make it more appealing
Fire truck	Need emergency operations plans, potentially increase communications with other organizations nearby to create regional emergency plans
Blue man	Village is unique, special, everyone has a "can do" attitude, optimistic, maintain the things that make community special
Phone charger	Village is at an upswing, "recharging", renaissance
Geneva 100-yr. coin	Village has come a long way and transformed in the last 10-15 years - Hope to see East Dundee share similarities with Geneva and St. Charles but maintains the hometown feel. Village has potential, opportunities
Safety pin	Safety is important, the Village feels safe
Garbage tote	Next year, the Village will issue an RFP for garbage services
Water valve	Village infrastructure enables life - sanitation, engineering creates more valuable town - capitalize on the water and river potential
Paintbrush	East Dundee Arts Council creates creative places for people to go and a helps East Dundee become a destination for tourists and residents
Pez dispenser	Village does a great job with community events - Meetings or meet ups foster a communal, neighborly atmosphere - micro level community engagement
Police car	Law enforcement - safety is important - Safety ensures growth, continuation of community events, resident satisfaction





**LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP:
VISIONING FOR THE FUTURE**

The workshop participants next engaged in a visioning exercise to describe the desired future direction of the Village by answering the following question: ***“If you left the community and didn’t return for 10-15 years, what do you think you will see or what do you hope you will see when you return in terms of Village services and programs?”*** 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. Responses are listed in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4
VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE [HOPE OR THINK YOU WILL SEE IN 10-15 YEARS]

STATEMENTS THAT INCLUDE AN ASTERISK (*) INDICATE THE IDEA WAS REPEATED OR AGREED WITH BY OTHERS

Hope or think you will see in 10-15 years...
Art, sculptures incorporated throughout community - prominent, visible, important
Gravel lot is addressed
Hope to see a successful theater downtown - Lots of community involvement with theater (community center)
Lumberyard is redeveloped
Redevelopment of Haeger and Route 72 corridor and Route 25 entrances - Ensure entrances are inviting, welcoming
Think the lead service line replacement process is close to complete - data-driven - long-term planning infrastructure
Hope Village has maintained financial stability* - Police pension is fully funded - Credit rating is upgraded
Village employee work and life balance remains - recruitment, retention efforts grow
Village maintains community events, fun atmosphere
Hope to see a more robust and connected trail network - improved walkability - recreation-focused
Riverfront development, implementation of the riverfront plan is prioritized, needs vs. wants are considered - Dock is finished - Continue to research funding sources, opportunities
Haeger lot is bustling, building happening - Residential and commercial developments
The Plote Construction property is annexed into the Village which provides a huge opportunity for growth and development
Hope the Village’s historical structures are preserved and any new developments match the historic charm
Hope Police Department gets more staff to become fully staffed - a need for staffing exists due to growth in Village



ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING PART I: SURRENDER OR LEAD EXERCISE

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

Next, 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 to reveal hopes, perspectives, challenges, opportunities, and possible barriers based on the collective view of each group. The responses were recorded and combined themes from the three groups are reported next. For a full list of Surrender or Lead responses from each group, see [Appendix B](#).

SURRENDER OR LEAD THEMES:

- Development, redevelopment, and utilization of vacant properties
- Riverfront development and recreation
- Preserve the Village's small town feel and authenticity
- Maintain fiscal stability amidst strategic growth

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING PART II: LARGE GROUP SWOC ANALYSIS

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

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 Village, both negatively and positively. Workshop 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 Village's advantage? Conversely, what trends or **challenges (C)** lie ahead that would be obstacles or hindrances? These elements could include both internal and external factors, conditions, trends, regulations, agencies, resources, etc. The full list of responses to the exercise are provided in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5
SWOC ANALYSIS

Statements that include an asterisk (*) indicate the idea was repeated or agreed with by others.

STRENGTHS

- Development, redevelopment, and utilization of vacant properties
- Employees throughout all departments
- Comcast running fiber in community
- Downtown area
- Bike trails
- Location - proximity to I-90 and the river (asset), adjacent to Cook County
- Change and development - significant changes for the better
- Business-friendly
- People want to age in place and come back, residents care about the community
- Village has made progress on updating technology
- Rich history and historic community

WEAKNESSES

- More police officers are needed - daytime and nighttime population differences call for more policing
- Multi-modes of communication are needed which provide more consistent updates and progress on Village projects
- High-volume traffic - regular truck traffic
- Not a lot of local news
- Newsletter or quarterly letter only
- Village does not currently have any cybersecurity software or training
- Lack of resources to obtain grants - grant writer needed

OPPORTUNITIES

- Bike trails
- Communication with residents; dissemination of information: social media*; project updates or progress*
- Favorable tax structure when compared to Cook County - an incentive and positive for businesses
- Becoming an age-friendly community
- Newsletter revamp - newspaper to communicate with residents [Idea: similar to "Reader Boxes" where residents can pick up along bike and walking trails]
- Updated technology throughout the departments: Public Works infrastructure GIS mapping*; Open data, database for future maintenance projects*; cybersecurity training, software*
- Refresh website and ensure it is ADA-compliant
- Riverfront development
- Regional grant writing opportunities - collaborate regionally on a grant writer to remain efficient and economical

CHALLENGES

- Staffing: recruitment and retention*; compensating employees competitively to maintain quality - e.g., Police Department staff*
- Location near communities that are larger, can offer more pay
- Change and the unknown
- Cost, finances, limited funding resources
- Flooding problem and the cost of building a flood abatement
- Aging population: accessibility may be lacking
- Aging infrastructure
- Cybersecurity threats
- Village website is not ADA-compliant
- Demands from growth: need larger facilities to accommodate more staff, e.g., a new Village Hall



STRATEGIC GOAL RANKING & PRIORITIZATION

POST-WORKSHOP

The workshop participants were asked to delineate, via a post-workshop online ranking exercise, which goals should be given the highest priority. The workshop participants were provided an online ranking tool where point values were assigned to each goal in both the short- and long-term categories. The calculation of goal prioritization consisted of “forced ranking” where the ranking of each identified goal is calculated as the average of the rankings given by all participants. For example, if a goal was given scores of 2, 5, 6, 6, 1, 2, and 3, the average total would be 3.57. **The lower the score, the higher the priority.** Again, the average totals were based on the rankings provided by the workshop participants.

The outcomes of the Village’s goal ranking exercise, along with the assigned priority levels for each goal, are presented in Figure 6. The dashboard demonstrates the strategic goals, tasks, and objectives for the Village leadership to address in the months and years ahead. Following the ranked goals, the Village’s broader priority areas are shared and defined. In addition to the the priority level for the strategic planning goals established at the leadership workshop, the dashboard also cross-references objectives from the comprehensive plan that relate to the goals. The objectives and full detail can be found in the comprehensive plan report.

FIGURE 6
2025 PRIORITIZED GOALS DASHBOARD
SHORT-TERM STRATEGIC GOALS

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIC GOALS <i>Short-term goals have a time frame of 1-3 years.</i>	PRIORITY LEVEL	COORDINATION WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OBJECTIVES
ST1: Evaluate development plans for the utilization of the former Haeger Pottery site.	High	2.3, 2.4, 6.6
ST2: Continue to replace the Village’s lead service lines.	High	
ST3: Develop and update the Village’s Communication Plan to engage the public and inform residents about progress on Village projects and events.	High	9.1, 9.3
ST4: Focus on recruitment and retention initiatives to ensure the Village has adequate staffing in all departments.	Medium	
ST5: Create a development plan for 2 and 4 N. Van Buren St., 408 Barrington, and the Lumberyard.	Medium	2.2, 3.4
ST6: Update the Village’s Emergency Operations Plan.	Medium	
ST7: Explore regional collaborations with surrounding communities where shared equipment and needed personnel may provide economies of scale, increased efficiency, and improved service delivery. - Shared social worker to address mental health needs, public works equipment, etc.	Lower	8.1
ST8: Build or secure an outdoor, off-street, mixed-use entertainment venue and band shell for community events.	Lower	5.1
ST9: Create a comprehensive Walking, Biking and Pedestrian Plan including safety and sidewalk improvements to connect the North and South sides of the Village. - Connecting Route 72 and River Street. - Consider partnering to reroute traffic patterns to reduce or eliminate the high volume of trucks traveling on Village roads (e.g., Routes 25 and 72).	Lower	4.1, 4.3, 5.6

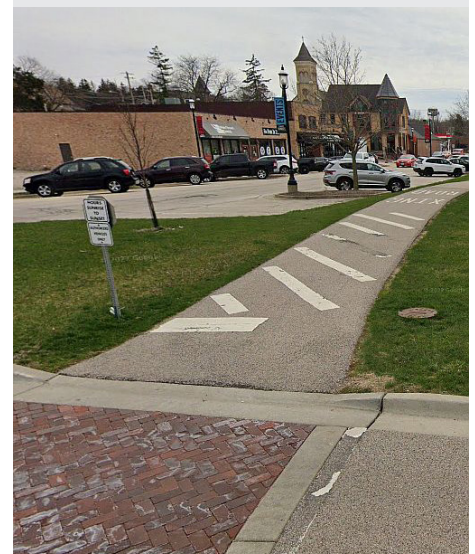
NOMINAL GROUP GOAL IDENTIFICATION

With the preceding discussion sessions and exercises acting as a sound foundation for goal setting, the next exercise provided time for a healthy group discussion and development of goals and objectives needed to achieve the future visions as expressed by workshop participants.

Participants worked in the same small groups for goal development. Each group was allotted time to develop, and then report out, three or four important policy and program goals they thought the Village should accomplish. Groups were asked to create goals using two timeframes; **short-term goals** (which could be started or accomplished in the next one to three years), as well as those that would be considered **long-term goals** (which could be accomplished in the next four- to eight-year time frame). Each workgroup then shared their short- and long-term goals with the larger group for feedback and discussion. Goals could be highly specific or general.

Open Group Discussion and Consolidation of Goals or Objectives

This final phase of the discussion served as the forum for workshop participants to discuss, refine, and compare the ideas and goals offered by each participant. Participants gave their opinions and further explained the fit, ideas, and policy outcomes expressed in the goals and discussed if additional goals were needed.



STRATEGIC GOAL RANKING & PRIORITIZATION POST-WORKSHOP

FIGURE 6
2025 PRIORITIZED GOALS DASHBOARD
LONG-TERM STRATEGIC GOALS

LONG-TERM STRATEGIC GOALS <i>Long-term goals have a time frame of 4-8+ years.</i>	PRIORITY LEVEL	COORDINATION WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OBJECTIVES
LT1: Implement the established lead pipes plan to complete the removal of the Village lead service lines.	High	
LT2: Ensure that the Police retirement fund is fully funded.	High	
LT3: Continue to improve the Village's bond rating to ensure financial sustainability and a strong fiscal position.	High	
LT4: Complete the Village's redevelopment projects (e.g., former Haeger Pottery property, the barn, and Van Buren St.).	High	2.2, 3.4
LT5: Maintain a healthy Fund reserve within the General and Water and Sewer Funds.	Medium	
LT6: Focus on development and beautification of the entryways of the Village's Route 72 corridor. - Art installations	Medium	1.3
LT7: Develop a plan to maximize riverfront utilization for recreation and events. - Additional park and green space connecting pathways	Medium	5.2, 6.4
LT8: Research and explore options for annexing the properties to the east including the Plote Construction property.	Medium	1.2, 1.5, 6.6
LT9: Invest in redevelopment of the Route 25 corridor.	Lower	3.4, 6.6
LT10: Purchase new GIS software (or hire a consultant) for the Public Works Department which can be utilized by all departments.	Lower	
LT11: Revitalize Main Street by burying wires downtown and making other infrastructure updates to draw more business and tourists to East Dundee.	Lower	1.3, 3.2
LT12: Utilize the Depot for more community events and consider additional parking options	Lower	3.3



STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

Based on an evaluation of the entirety of the process, including stakeholder feedback, discussions at the workshop, and the goals developed, several high-level strategic priority areas were identified. These priority areas highlight the activities and initiatives that the Village will focus on in both the short and long term. The strategic priority areas identified as a result of the strategic planning process are fully defined next. For strategic goal and focus group data alignment related to each area, see [Appendix C](#).

CONNECTIVITY, RECREATION, AND BEAUTIFICATION



Long-term planning and investment in recreational assets such as the river will continue to be a draw for residents, potential businesses, and help increase tourism. The opportunity also exists to improve connectivity in the Village by connecting walking paths and adding additional green space for community events and leisure.

- Develop a plan to maximize riverfront utilization for recreation and events.
 - Additional park and green space, connecting pathways.
 - Utilize the Depot for more community events and consider additional parking options.
- Focus on development and beautification of the entryways of the Village's Route 72 corridor.
 - Art installations
- Revitalize Main Street by burying wires downtown and making other infrastructure updates to draw more business and tourists to East Dundee.
- Create a comprehensive Walking, Biking and Pedestrian Plan including safety and sidewalk improvements to connect the North and South sides of the Village.
 - Connecting Route 72 and River Street.
 - Consider partnering to reroute traffic patterns to reduce or eliminate the high volume of trucks traveling on Village roads (e.g., Routes 25 and 72).

ORGANIZATIONAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE GROWTH AND ADVANCEMENT



Proactive planning and strategic investments in the Village's infrastructure are essential to ensuring Village facilities and personnel levels are sustainable and can accommodate potential growth. The expansion of Village Hall to accommodate growth in staffing will enable the Village to adapt to, and plan for, changes in population, demographics, and tourism, positioning the community for long-term success.

- Implement the established lead pipes plan to complete the removal of the Village lead service lines.
- Continue to replace the Village's lead service lines.
- Continue to improve the Village's bond rating to ensure financial sustainability and a strong fiscal position.
- Purchase new GIS software (or hire a consultant) for the Public Works Department which can be utilized by all departments.
- Ensure that the Police retirement fund is fully funded.
- Explore regional collaborations with surrounding communities where shared equipment and needed personnel may provide economies of scale, increased efficiency, and improved service delivery.
 - Shared social worker to address mental health needs, public works equipment, etc.
- Focus on recruitment and retention initiatives to ensure the Village has adequate staffing in all departments.
- Update the Village's Emergency Operations Plan.
- Develop and update the Village's Communication Plan to engage the public and inform residents about progress on Village projects and events.
- Maintain a healthy Fund reserve within the General and Water and Sewer Funds.

DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT



The Village of East Dundee's rich history and charm lend themselves to successful business and industrial districts. Continued focus on existing development projects will be important to achieving East Dundee's economic goals, including increasing tourism dollars, and recruiting new businesses that will complement and diversify the Village's current business mix.

- Build or secure an outdoor, off-street, mixed-use entertainment venue and band shell for community events.
- Complete the Village's redevelopment projects (e.g., former Haeger Pottery property, the barn, and Van Buren St.).
- Research and explore options for annexing the properties to the east including the Plöte Construction property.
- Invest in redevelopment of the Route 25 corridor.
- Create a development plan for 2 and 4 N. Van Buren St., 408 Barrington, and the Lumberyard.
- Evaluate development plans for the utilization of the former Haeger Pottery site.



CONCLUSION

The value of the strategic planning process will only be realized if this report is used as an active working guide for the leaders of the Village of East Dundee. This document captures the content of the discussions and assists the Village's leaders in developing implementation plans for their high-priority goals.

In the Village's ever evolving operating environment, adapting to changes in demographics, community trends, technology advancements, and best practices, among others, will be key. The strategic plan is meant to be a roadmap 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 so the entire Village consistently recognizes and meets changes in community needs and expectations. In addition, the Village is encouraged to continue to engage in regular strategic planning process updates and renewals every three 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 that is looking ahead and committed to strategic thinking and planning.

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



Melissa Henriksen



Alli Hoebing

NIU-CGS Project
Coordinators and
Session Facilitators



APPENDIX

A: Focus Group and Leadership Interview Feedback	A2
B: Surrender or Lead Exercise	A6
C: Strategic Priority Area Goal and Stakeholder Feedback Alignment	A7



Appendix A: Focus Group and Leadership Interview Feedback

SUMMARY

One of the key analytical techniques used for focus group and interview notes is an analyst's search for key phrases, words, or terms that emerged during the focus group and interview sessions, a process known as *coding*. Coding is done by analysts' individual readings of the data, followed by key term searches. The words and phrases listed below are the results of the study team's analysis of the collected focus group and interview 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 reveal 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 focus group sessions and leadership interviews. The stakeholder feedback collection served 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 Village leadership team to consider during the strategic planning workshop.

The same exploratory discussion questions were asked to each focus group and interviewee and are listed below:

1. How would you describe the Village to a stranger or someone who doesn't live or work in the area?
2. If you left and didn't return for 10-15 years, what services or programs do you think you would see the Village offering or what do you hope you would see when you return?
3. What do you like best about the Village? Related to that, what are the strengths or greatest assets of Galesburg?
4. Can you identify areas or topics in need of attention or improvement? Related to that, what are the weaknesses or greatest needs for the Village?
5. What are or should be the top priorities for the Village over the next three to five years?
6. If you could change or initiate one key item or one goal for the Village, what would it be?

Overall Themes Based on All External Focus Group Feedback

DOWNTOWN AND RIVERFRONT REVITALIZATION

- Improve and expand the Depot
 - Turn gravel lot into a green space
 - Install a band shell
 - Make use of open space (e.g., thriving Farmer's Market)
- Attract more retail downtown with extended hours to accommodate tourists, visitors, residents and for special events

- Revitalize and clean up the entire Riverfront
 - Riverfront development plan in place and movement on priorities
 - Provide parking space, dining options, high-end housing and diversity of housing along the riverfront
 - Install a kayak launch or dock for the river so it can be utilized more. Removing the dam may help
- Create a thriving downtown
 - Ideas included a fireplace downtown
 - Allow alcohol downtown – outside, lessen permitting or policy restrictions
 - Evaluate raising height limit on downtown buildings
 - Maintain historic integrity of buildings while updating downtown
- More live entertainment including indoors – Performing Arts Center (e.g., Reuse Center)
- Need a parking garage in town to overcome the lack of parking spots given the growth in the businesses and community
- Address the noise pollution in downtown
 - Establish quiet hours

INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION

- Well maintained community but need to address the older water infrastructure
 - Develop long-term plans and be transparent, communicate those plans
- Improve River Road and Rock Road
- Beautify the gateway entrances and location of dealerships (include signage and trees)
- Consider developing an appearance review committee for current and prospective businesses
- Address the walkability issues along Route 72
- Lack of access to public transportation
- Façade upgrades – buildings improved to look like rest of town
 - More cohesive look and feel needed - can feel like an unfinished product

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Redevelop the Haeger property
 - Identify best options for redevelopment and communicate next steps
 - Develop stores and apartments with a creek running through
 - Relocate Village Hall to this location
 - Develop multi-use buildings – arts, shops, green space, splash pad playground – avoid noise pollution
- Provide technical assistance and incentives to recruit, retain and support small businesses
 - Include funding, façade matching, ROI and tracking outcomes of funding
- Village support for creating a countywide economic development group
- Explore establishing a medical district to attract more doctors, dentists, etc.
- Movement on Village owned properties, smaller scale projects

- Regional marketing efforts established in strategic plan & comprehensive plan – short-term and legacy projects
- Attract more diverse dining and food options
- Capitalize on Routes 72 and 25 as opportunities for development (e.g., old Walmart location)
- Attract a grocery store
- Establish a cultural center – already have community support and volunteers
- Controlled and intentional growth
 - Not density for density’s sake

Overall Themes Based on the Staff Focus Group Feedback

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Enhance Village staffing levels to improve core community services and staff satisfaction
 - Police Department needs 2-4 more FTE
 - Public Works needs at least two more FTE
 - Need staff for code enforcement to improve conditions and quality of buildings
 - A heavier social media presence with part-time staff to manage
- Improve the work and life balance for Village staff but understand it is hard to offer options such as work from home for some and not all.
- Address the recruitment and retention issues across the organization – work and life balance options may help in addition to compensation
- Improved benefits (e.g., vacation time) and make fair between employees so all have opportunities for balance
- Allow co-workers to participate in interviews for new hires along with supervisors and administration
- Enhance respect and trust from top to bottom and within teams
- Continue to update and improve Public Works and Police equipment on a regular basis

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND COLLABORATION

- Share news and announcements with people who are not online or technologically savvy
- Improve collaboration with surrounding communities - sharing equipment, events, etc.
- Consider hiring a mental health trained specialist to help address mental health issues within the community
- Establish data-driven partnerships between Elgin Community College and the Village on how to better serve the Village residents and businesses
- Consider a new library building (library district)
- Address the lack of resources for homeless population
 - Transportation, homes, funding
- Should not give tickets for overnight parking

Overall Themes Based on the Leadership Interviews

ECONOMIC AND DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

The Village is focused on strategic development to continue to enhance its downtown and other areas. A key question is how to move forward in a way that aligns with community values while ensuring sustainability and its rich history. There is potential to expand the downtown area, particularly by repurposing land north of the current downtown. It was noted that there is a need to beautify the entryways, especially the hill with the Haeger sign, and resolve the issue of a large gravel lot in the downtown area to create more green space and better define the downtown's boundaries.

TRAFFIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Traffic issues were noted as a significant challenge for the Village, particularly due to heavy truck traffic causing congestion on Route 72. Key infrastructure improvements are needed, such as revitalizing Route 25, adding a bike lane on Route 68, a pedestrian bridge at River Street and Route 72, and redesigning the intersection near Dairy Queen. Additionally, extending Triangle Park to the waterline could create a new riverfront attraction and help redirect truck traffic away from critical areas.

RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT AND RECREATION

Better integration of the riverfront with the downtown would create a more connected and inviting space for both residents and visitors. Some ideas suggested removing the dam to allow for a kayak launch and enhancing the riverfront with new infrastructure to better highlight its natural beauty. The new riverfront plan aims to balance economic development and natural beauty, creating a welcoming area that supports local businesses and offers recreational opportunities.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The increase of mental health issues, domestic abuse calls, limited public transportation, and the absence of a grocery store were mentioned as some challenges for Village services and quality of life. Furthermore, the aging population faces accessibility challenges, and there is a desire for more downtown shopping and more memorable town gateways. To enhance livability, it would be beneficial for the Village to focus on creating a walkable, bike-friendly environment, improving biking infrastructure, and promoting the "15-minute city" concept, where safe bike lanes connect the Village to downtown, reducing car traffic.

Appendix B: Surrender or Lead Exercise

The **bolded** and underlined sections are key phrases that each group provided in response to the Surrender or Lead exercise's open-ended questions and prompts during the leadership workshop.

Group 1:

1. We want to **become a desirable destination**, but **remain affordable and not lose authenticity**.
2. The two most important things to focus on are **continuation of our positive brand** and **financial stability** because **both are needed to continue our forward momentum**.
3. If it weren't for **lack of resources**, we would **achieve more goals by now**.
4. We need to finally **get the grave lot**.
5. **Haeger redevelopment** will have the biggest impact on the Village in the coming 2-3 years.

Group 2:

1. We want to **grow**, but **strategically**.
2. The two most important things to focus on are **riverfront** and **downtown** because **they bring the community together**.
3. If it weren't for **our size**, we would **lose our small-town feel**.
4. We need to finally **utilize the riverfront!**
5. **Redevelopment Haeger property** will have the biggest impact on the Village in the coming 2-3 years.

Group 3:

1. We want to **evolve and grow**, but **maintain our character and charm**.
2. The two most important things to focus on are **resident collaboration** and **economic development and sustainability** because **that's how we elicit community "buy-in" and create an invested population**.
3. If it weren't for the **Depot Park**, we would **be missing the heart and identity of our community**.
4. We need to finally **improve resident communication**.
5. **Fully realizing our development opportunities** will have the biggest impact on the Village in the coming 2-3 years.

Appendix C: Strategic Priority Area Goal and Stakeholder Feedback Alignment

Connectivity, Recreation, and Beautification

Long-term planning and investment in recreational assets such as the river will continue to be a draw for residents, potential businesses, and even tourism dollars. The opportunity also exists to unite the north and south ends of the Village by connecting the Village's walking paths and adding additional green space for community events.

Connectivity, Recreation, and Beautification-aligning goals developed at the leadership workshop:

- Develop a plan to maximize riverfront utilization for recreation and events.
 - Additional park and green space, connecting pathways
 - Utilize the Depot for more community events and consider additional parking options
- Focus on development and beautification of the entryways of the Village's Route 72 corridor.
 - Art installations
- Revitalize Main Street by burying wires downtown and making other infrastructure updates to draw more business and tourists to East Dundee.
- Create a comprehensive Walking, Biking and Pedestrian Plan including safety and sidewalk improvements to connect the North and South sides of the Village.
 - Connecting Route 72 and River Street.
 - Consider partnering to reroute traffic patterns to reduce or eliminate the high volume of trucks traveling on Village roads (e.g., Routes 25 and 72).

Connectivity, Recreation, and Beautification-aligning stakeholder feedback:

- Improve River Road and Rock Road
- Beautify the gateway entrances and location of dealerships (include signage and trees)
- Consider developing an appearance review committee for current and prospective businesses
- Address the walkability issues along Route 72
- Lack of access to public transportation
- Façade upgrades – buildings improved to look like rest of town
 - More cohesive look and feel needed - can feel like an unfinished product
- More live entertainment including indoors – Performing Arts Center (e.g., Reuse Center)

Organizational and Infrastructure Growth and Advancement

Proactive planning and strategic investments in the Village's infrastructure are essential to ensuring Village facilities and personnel are sustainable and can accommodate potential growth. The expansion of Village Hall to accommodate growth in staffing will enable the Village to adapt to, and plan for, changes in population, demographics, and tourism, positioning the community for long-term success.

Organizational and Infrastructure Growth and Advancement-aligning goals developed at the leadership workshop:

- Implement the established lead pipes plan to complete the removal of the Village lead service lines.
- Continue to replace the Village's lead service lines.
- Continue to improve the Village's bond rating to ensure financial sustainability and a strong fiscal position.
- Purchase new GIS software (or hire a consultant) for the Public Works Department which can be utilized by all departments.
- Ensure that the Police retirement fund is fully funded.
- Explore regional collaborations with surrounding communities where shared equipment and needed personnel may provide economies of scale, increased efficiency, and improved service delivery.
 - Shared social worker to address mental health needs, public works equipment, etc.
- Focus on recruitment and retention initiatives to ensure the Village has adequate staffing in all departments.
- Update the Village's Emergency Operations Plan.
- Develop and update the Village's Communication Plan to engage the public and inform residents about progress on Village projects and events.
- Maintain a healthy Fund reserve within the General and Water and Sewer Funds.

Organizational and Infrastructure Growth and Advancement-aligning stakeholder feedback:

- Well maintained community but need to address the older water infrastructure
 - Develop long-term plans and be transparent and communicate those plans
- Enhance Village staffing levels to improve core community services and staff satisfaction
 - Police Department needs 2-4 more FTE
 - Public Works needs at least two more FTE
 - Need staff for code enforcement to improve conditions and quality of buildings
 - A heavier social media presence with part-time staff to manage
- Improve the work and life balance for Village staff but understand it is hard to offer options such as work from home for some and not all.

- Address the recruitment and retention issues across the organization – work and life balance options may help in addition to compensation
- Improved benefits (e.g., vacation time) and make fair between employees so all have opportunities for balance
- Allow co-workers to participate in interviews for new hires along with supervisors and administration
- Enhance respect and trust from top to bottom and within teams
- Continue to update and improve Public Works and Police equipment on a regular basis

Downtown Economic Development and Redevelopment

The Village of East Dundee's rich history and charm lends itself to successful business and industrial districts. Continued focus on existing development projects will be important to achieving East Dundee's economic goals, including increasing tourism dollars, and recruiting new businesses that will complement and diversify the Village's current business mix.

Downtown and Economic Development and Redevelopment-aligning goals developed at the leadership workshop:

- Build or secure an outdoor, off-street, mixed-use entertainment venue and band shell for community events.
- Complete the Village's redevelopment projects (e.g., former Haeger Pottery property, the barn, and Van Buren St.).
- Research and explore options for annexing the properties to the east including the Plote Construction property.
- Invest in redevelopment of the Route 25 corridor.
- Create a development plan for 2 and 4 N. Van Buren St., 408 Barrington, and the Lumberyard.
- Evaluate development plans for the utilization of the former Haeger Pottery site.

Downtown and Economic Development and Redevelopment-aligning stakeholder feedback:

- Redevelop the Haeger property
 - Identify best options for redevelopment and communicate next steps
 - Develop stores and apartments with a creek running through
 - Relocate Village Hall to this location
 - Develop multi-use buildings – arts, shops, green space, splash pad playground – avoid noise pollution
- Provide technical assistance and incentives to recruit, retain, and support small businesses
 - Include funding, façade matching, ROI and tracking outcomes of funding
- Village support for creating a countywide economic development group
- Explore establishing a medical district to attract more doctors, dentists, etc.
- Movement on Village owned properties, smaller scale projects

- Regional marketing efforts established in strategic plan & comprehensive plan – short-term and legacy projects
- Attract more diverse dining and food options
- Capitalize on Routes 72 and 25 as opportunities for development (e.g., old Walmart location)
- Attract a grocery store
- Establish a cultural center – already have community support and volunteers
- Controlled and intentional growth
 - Not density for density’s sake
- Attract more retail downtown with extended hours to accommodate tourists, visitors, residents and for special events
- Create a thriving downtown
 - Ideas included a fireplace downtown
 - Allow alcohol downtown – outside, lessen permitting and policy restrictions
 - Evaluate raising height limit on downtown buildings
 - Maintain historic integrity of buildings while updating downtown
- Address the noise pollution in downtown
 - Establish quiet hours