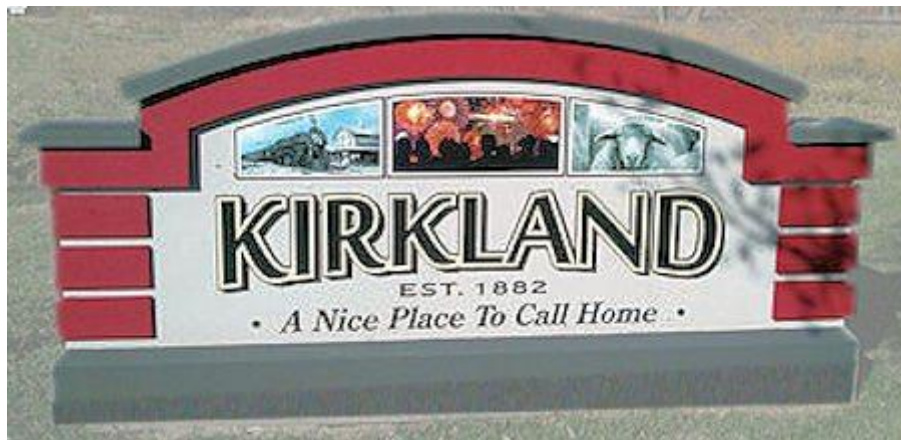


Village of Kirkland Strategic Planning and Goal Development 2018-2023



Prepared by Session Facilitators

Melissa Henriksen, MPP
Senior Research Associate

Gregory Kuhn, Ph.D.
Associate Director
Public Management
and Training

Jeanna Ballard, MPA
Research Associate

NIU Center for Governmental Studies
148 N. Third Street
DeKalb, IL 60115
www.cgs.niu.edu

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategic planning is a preferred approach to guiding a community's future rather than making decisions issue by issue. To this end, the Village of Kirkland pursued, and was awarded, an economic and community development planning [grant](#) from the DeKalb County Community Foundation ([DCCF](#)) in April 2018 to engage in strategic planning. The Village leadership asked the Center for Governmental Studies ([CGS](#)) at Northern Illinois University ([NIU](#)) to facilitate a series of input gathering sessions with its residents, business owners, Village Board members and community partners followed by a strategic planning workshop with Village Board and staff.

Prior to the strategic planning workshop sessions with the Board, CGS worked with Village staff to promote gathering community input. This approach included CGS facilitating several focus groups from a cross-sector of community members, businesses and community partners as well as interviews with the Village Board and staff. With the focus groups and interviews as a starting point for discussions, both Board and staff members participated in two workshops, held on June 18th and June 25th, 2018, which provided a positive atmosphere to set aside time to methodically, *strategically*, determine where it is Kirkland wants to go as a Village.

Participants in the workshops were involved in several exercises and sessions aimed at gathering input regarding Kirkland's mission, vision for the future, opportunities, threats confronting the Village, and identification of the key issues that should be addressed to guide the Village's future. Through the strategic planning process, goals and priorities were also identified in the context of the Village's vision and sustaining values.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Ultimately, five key strategic priority areas were identified as an outcome of the process, highlighting activities and initiatives that the Village should focus its resources on in both the short- and long-term. The strategic priority areas identified during the workshop sessions [in no particular order] were economic and business development, financial management and stability, community engagement, infrastructure effectiveness and improvement, and core service delivery continuity.



STRATEGIC GOALS

Several key strategic goals were also identified as an outcome of the process. Workshop participants were asked to classify each of the goals developed according to a matrix model of time and complexity. Agreed criteria were used to classify a goal as short- or long-term and as complex or routine (please see full report for defined criteria). Following the classification exercise, the Board was asked to delineate, via an online ranking exercise, which goals should be given higher priority than others. In total, the group developed eight short-term routine goals, eight short-term complex goals, five long-term routine goals, and nine long-term complex goals, prior to any consolidation. The top three ranked goals are offered here as a process “snapshot” representing the most important strategic goals or priority areas for the Board and planning committee to address in the months and years ahead. For a full review of all strategic goals/priority areas presented, discussed and ranked, please refer to the full report.

Village of Kirkland **2018-23 Top Goals within Each Quadrant of the Time and Complexity Matrix**

SHORT-TERM ROUTINE

- Evaluate incentive options to create a business-friendly environment in Kirkland
- Create a long-term financial plan for the Village including funding for infrastructure improvements
- Village proactively evaluates and develops a capital Improvement plan (CIP) that focuses on short and long-term prioritized infrastructure improvements

SHORT-TERM COMPLEX

- Complete Bull Run Creek Project and maintenance work – The Big Dig- Offer free fill dirt
- Encourage/explore options for downtown development to help eliminate vacancies
- Complete Hickory Ridge subdivision- Streets, etc., including working with the developer to finish lots

LONG-TERM ROUTINE

- Implement long-term financial plan to ensure economic and community development priorities are accomplished
- Develop approaches and options to encourage more community involvement in Kirkland activities, volunteer opportunities, development, etc.
- Create/expand a “shop local” program and encourage small businesses including both retention and expansion

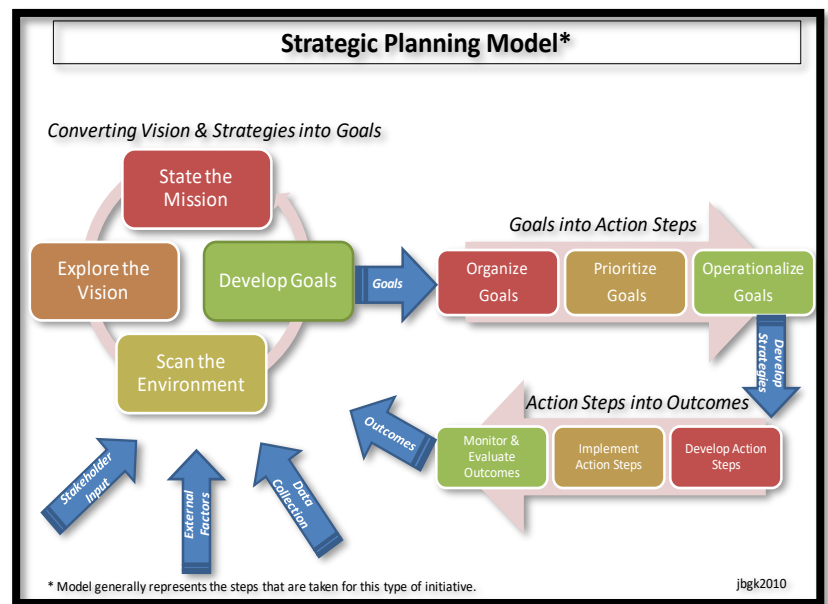
LONG-TERM COMPLEX

- Develop and implement a capital improvement plan (CIP)
- Encourage new business development in community that creates gathering spaces and helps to keep residents in town for basic needs
- Replace Pearl Street bridge; develop plans, estimates and secure funding

INTRODUCTION

As a Village, Kirkland has now placed itself among the special class of communities that engage in formalized strategic planning and goal setting (Figure 1). Strategic planning sessions are not a new phenomenon for progressive communities and the value of such processes continues to be recognized by policy-making boards and staff members in both private and public organizations. This important work will serve the community well into the coming years. Kirkland's strategic planning process began in April 2018 with gathering input throughout the community including interviews and focus groups. After gathering input from stakeholders was complete, two workshop sessions were held with the Village Board and staff members in late June 2018 to discuss a future vision for the Village and establish new goals. The 2018 workshop sessions provided a positive atmosphere to set aside time to methodically—*strategically*—determine where it is the Village wants to go as an organization and a community.

Figure 1. Strategic Planning Model



As was shared with Board and staff members at the conclusion of the workshop sessions, the Village should resist the temptation to re-arrange priorities as the fiscal year moves along. It is important to adhere to the results of the Board and staff members' efforts throughout the Village's strategic planning and budgeting processes; do not pull a seemingly easy goal from the bottom of the list of priorities just because it seems easy. This kind of shifting can create a confusing tone in the organization.

Pre-Workshop: Environmental Scanning - Stakeholder Input

Listening to stakeholders is vital to the planning process and is an important part of "taking stock," which helps Village leadership, residents and businesses to better understand current policy and operational perspectives, perceptions and preferences. In order for the Village of Kirkland to best serve its community in these planning efforts, several input gathering options were used. The first input gathering came in the form of interviews with Village staff members to gain a better understanding of their positions, the issues and challenges they may face, and their initial thoughts on the vision and goals for the Village. The next input gathering phase included several focus groups with community and business members.

Three focus groups were held with civic and community leaders as well as residents in May 2018. The focus group sessions were designed to serve 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 Board and staff to consider during the strategic planning workshop sessions (see [Appendix A](#) for a full summary of all focus group data).

Focus Group Themes:

- **For the Village of Kirkland we *envision a future* in which:**
 - Infrastructure is updated and maintained
 - Downtown is revitalized with a variety of local businesses
 - Business and economic growth have become a top priority
 - More employment opportunities are available to residents, including youth
 - History and identity are maintained for future generations
- **The Village of Kirkland *is...***
 - A close-knit, caring community
 - Supportive of local business owners
 - Strategically-located, close to larger communities, but still rural
 - A nice quiet place to call home with good schools, safe neighborhoods, and friendly and helpful residents
- **The Village of Kirkland *offers...***
 - Strong Village leadership
 - Active community and civic organizations
 - Low property taxes and an affordable cost of living
 - Agricultural opportunities in a strategic location to urban amenities
- **The Village of Kirkland should *strive towards...***
 - Revitalizing the downtown to have a variety of dining and entertainment options
 - Hosting more community events and activities that build on currently successful events (i.e., 4th of July)
 - Increasing recreational opportunities for residents of all ages
 - Facilitating a culture of business and economic growth to keep money in Kirkland
- **The Village of Kirkland's *future expectations and priorities are to...***
 - Reinvest in infrastructure, giving current and future residents a safe and appealing community
 - Revitalize the downtown to be aesthetically pleasing and have a variety of shops and services
 - Facilitate economic and business development that aligns with Kirkland's charm and history
 - Increase employment opportunities for residents and apprenticeships/mentoring for youth
 - Find our niche-what makes Kirkland unique and how can we build on that?

Outline of Leadership Exercises and Discussion Sessions

The format for all of the discussion sessions used in the planning effort employed approaches that were highly participative and interactive. The process utilized a group discussion approach called 'Nominal Group Technique'

where participants are assured equal opportunities to speak and share opinions by the facilitator. During the sessions, individuals had the opportunity to generate and share both individual and group ideas, weigh alternatives, and refine

Workshop Session I. Introduction Exercise – Visioning and Important Issue

their thinking through dialogue. As ideas were shared and debated, the group worked steadily toward a consensus of the Village’s mission, values, future directions and priorities.

Each participant engaged in a visioning and key issue exercise by selecting two items from the “garage sale” table and using the items to first answer the following visioning question: “In 10-12 years when I return to Kirkland, I hope to see, or think I will see with regard to economic and community development...” and second to describe a key topic or issue the group should address within the next 12 months. 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. This was a brainstorming exercise—any and all ideas about the Village’s future were encouraged and shared.

Future visioning is a key component of any strategic planning process. To engage the workshop participants in a visioning process, each participant was asked to articulate what he or she perceives to be the preferred future state of Kirkland. What services, programs, staffing levels, and general features would, or should, be present in Kirkland at these intervals.

Below is a summary of those answers pertaining to the each participant’s vision for the future. **Note: (^) indicates a statement that was repeated more than once.*

A. Visions for the Future of the Village

GARAGE SALE ITEM	VISION RELATED TO SELECTED ITEM
Metra map	Rail service to Kirkland
Water valve	Splash pad or water feature for recreation
Brick	A nice downtown area with mix of businesses (e.g., bakery, flower shop, laundromat)
Brick	More storefronts, businesses in Kirkland and some industrial/commercial to host good paying jobs
Basketball	Like our park district that expanded programming vs. just passive park land as of today – programs for all ages
Illinois map	More outdoor activities/recreational opportunities (^), e.g., trails (^), canoe launch (^), programs, dredge pond, walking paths
Checkbook	Fill up the Kirkland industrial park – adds to tax base, increased activity, investments, jobs
Shoelaces	Look at assets we have and build on them – attract people (canoes, agriculture, Kishwaukee College, etc.)
Wine cork	Winery and all that goes with it – travel, visitors, entertainment, dining, etc., or brewery, distillery and destination business
Capitol dome	Growth and change, enhancements, investments (rail, splash pad, housing, businesses) – maybe a community center, healthy community, desirable “cared for”
Water valve	Splash pad or water feature for recreation

Participants next used their second “garage sale” item to describe an issue the Village should focus on in the next 12 months...”

Below is a summary of those answers pertaining to the participant’s short-term issue identification:

B. Village Issues to Address in the Short-Term (next 12 months)

GARAGE SALE ITEM	ISSUE ASSOCIATED WITH SELECTED ITEM
Coffee mug	Coffee shop – community-supported bakery
Paintbrush	Beautification, painting, flowers, etc.
Paintbrush	General upkeep – implement “low-hanging fruit and projects to help with progress - small, but mighty community
Headphones	Input from residents, businesses, local organizations – fix what we can
Hard hat	Houses starting to be built – Hickory Ridge – continued development of subdivision
Hard hat	Finish started projects – community center, giant hold in the ground, etc.
Hard hat	Financing plan for major infrastructure projects (e.g, roads, bridge, others)
Watch	Catch up on needed infrastructure projects (old water/sewer will need to be addressed)
Fire hydrant	Dog park, paint fire hydrants – be creative
PVC pipe	Water, sewer system updated
Coffee mug	Coffee shop – community-supported bakery

Workshop Session II. Surrender or Lead

Participants were introduced to a leadership exercise titled “Surrender or Lead.” The premise is that sub-groups of the participants work to develop responses to some simple, but extremely effective and thought-provoking questions. Participants were broken up into three working groups and asked to respond to a series of structured questions designed to initiate discussion and reveal perspectives, challenges and frustrations of the participants as a whole. The participants’ responses discussed are recorded below. Underlined sections are key phrases that groups provided in response to the open questions.

Team #1

1. We want to grow but with responsibility for its impact.
2. The two most important things to focus on are time and money because time is money.
3. If it weren’t for long-term neglect, we would be in a better state.
4. We need to finally let the past go – move forward.
5. Being proactive will have the biggest impact on our future.

Team #2

1. We want to fix everything but we don't have the money.
2. The two most important things to focus on are planning and budgeting because we need to plan and be prepared for the future.
3. If it weren't for the community, its people and its leaders, we would be stagnant.
4. We need to finally plan for the future.
5. The decisions we make today will have the biggest impact on our future.

Team #3

1. We want to grow responsibly but maintain our small-town identity.
2. The two most important things to focus on are finance and infrastructure because we cannot grow without either of these.
3. If it weren't for past inefficiencies and neglect, we would be in a better position to implement today's plans and goals.
4. We need to finally set a course and move forward in a strategic and efficient manner.
5. Partnerships and collaboration between all parties in the community will have the biggest impact on our future.

Workshop Session III. Environmental Scanning: Internal and External S.W.O.T

The next step of the strategic planning process was a review and accounting of the internal and external factors present in the environment that could potentially impact the success of Kirkland, both negatively and positively. Given the exploratory statements and challenges raised in the Surrender or Lead exercise, participants were then asked to identify what constraints and practical difficulties are likely to be encountered that will make it difficult to achieve the desired future state. These elements included both internal and external factors, conditions, trends, regulations, agencies, resources, etc. Furthermore, what are the Village's strengths (**S**) and weaknesses (**W**)? In what areas does it 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 its advantage? Conversely, what trends or threats (**T**) lie ahead that would be obstacles or hindrances?

S.W.O.T. Exercise

(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Internal

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Fire protection district • Nice downtown – unified streetlights, curbs • River • Location to several bigger cities • NIU and Kishwaukee College • School • Parks • Walnut Grove • Small town atmosphere • Old IGA Building • Rail spurs for industrial areas • 4th of July event • Industrial park • Space for light industrial businesses • Village text program • Active on Facebook • Improvements of waste/water plant • Cheap rents • Own police force	• River floods • Location – easy to leave • Old IGA building needs repair • Lack of a community center • Roads/sanitation – just getting by • 4th of July can be costly for businesses/community • Stagnant housing market • Finances of Village – limited capacity – prioritize • Small town atmosphere ○ Compete for academic sports program • Lack of useable storefronts • Cost of industrial parking lots • Cheap rents • Wastewater treatment – can't handle large development • Park districts (activities) • Forest preserves not maintained by State/county forest preserve district ○ IDOR

S.W.O.T. Exercise Cont'd

(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

External

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• Downtown beautification • River – capitalize on (recreation/canoe launch) • Talk with owner of industrial lots ○ Educate ○ Costs • Collaboration with local businesses • Higher rental market • Recreation programs • Youth activities • School – work with to develop more after-school programs • Stagnant housing market • Open space downtown for business development • Parks & forest preserves • Recreation asset/attraction • Fiber optic • Old IGA building connectivity/availability ○ Community center • Rail spur on railroad to keep industrial businesses and encourage growth • Develop long-term financial plan • Boy scout camp	• State of Illinois • Taxes • River • Old IGA building • 4th of July event ○ Capacity ○ Cost • DeKalb County new construction tax structure • Online feedback • Out-migration – people leaving the state • Boy scout building

Workshop Session IV. Nominal Group Goal Identification

This dynamic session provided the forum for the collaborative establishment of strategic goals and objectives necessary to achieve the future vision of the planning committee. With the preceding sessions serving as a sound foundation for goal setting, the final session was a healthy group discussion of goals or strategies needed to achieve the future visions as expressed by the group. To begin the process, each participant was allotted time to highlight the two or three most important policy/program goals that he or she thinks Kirkland should accomplish in the next one to five years.

Goals could be highly specific or general. Again, only questions of clarification were permitted to be asked during this session. Evaluative or judgmental assertions/debates were deferred to a follow-up session where all participants engaged in open discussions of the goals or action items, their impact on the region, the Village, and their relative importance to Kirkland's current or future circumstances.

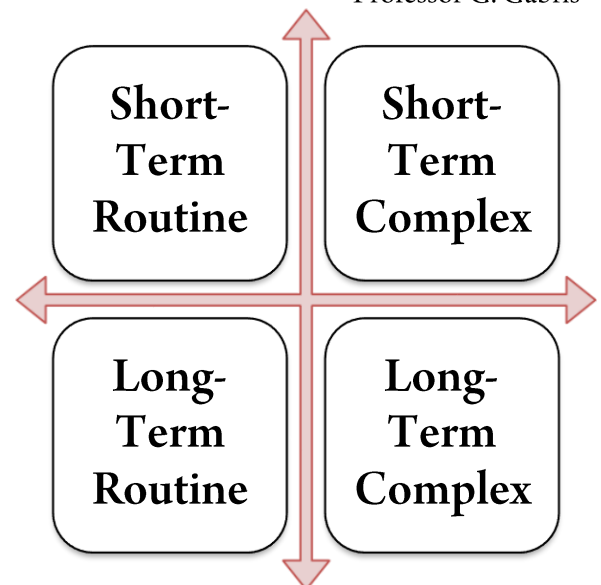
Classification. All statements were recorded on flipchart paper. At the end of the open discussion, participants were asked to classify each goal according to a matrix model of time and complexity. Agreed upon criteria were used to classify a goal as short- or long-term and as complex or routine (Figure 2). **Short-term goals** were those goals that could or should be completed or substantially underway in the next 1-3 years. **Long-term goals** were those goals that could or should be completed or substantially underway in the next 4-8 years. **Complex goals** were goals that required extraordinary resources, specialists, funding, or the agreement of outside communities or agencies. **Routine goals**, although not necessarily simple, were goals that could be accomplished upon unilateral decision of the Board and within present budget streams or with minor revenue enhancements or reallocations. The purpose of the exercise is to group goals of roughly the same type together so when prioritization occurs, the participants can avoid the problem of comparing "apples to oranges".

Open Group Discussion and Consolidation of Goals

This final phase of the discussion served as the forum for the Kirkland Board and staff to discuss, evaluate and debate the ideas and goals offered by each participant in the previous sessions. Participants were asked to give their opinions, evaluations and judgments of the worthiness and value of different policy objectives. In total, the group developed eight short-term routine goals, eight short-term complex goals, five long-term routine goals, and nine long-term complex goals.

Figure 2. Goal Complexity Matrix

– Professor G. Gabris



Prioritization of Goals

Following the classification exercise, the group was asked to delineate, via an online ranking exercise, which goals should be given higher priority than others. Group members were provided an online ranking tool where point values were assigned to each goal in each quadrant of the matrix by individuals. The calculation of goal ranking consisted of “forced ranking” where the ranking of each identified goal is averaged by the rankings given by all Board members. For example, if a goal is given the 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 ratings provided by the Board members.

The following presents the Board’s top prioritized goals, within each quadrant, as they emerged from the consensus ranking exercise (Figure 3). The top three goals based on the Board’s average scores are offered here as a process “snapshot” of the most important strategic goals or issue areas for the Board and staff members to address in the months and years ahead. For a full review and appreciation of all the strategic goals discussed and ranked, please see [Appendix B](#).

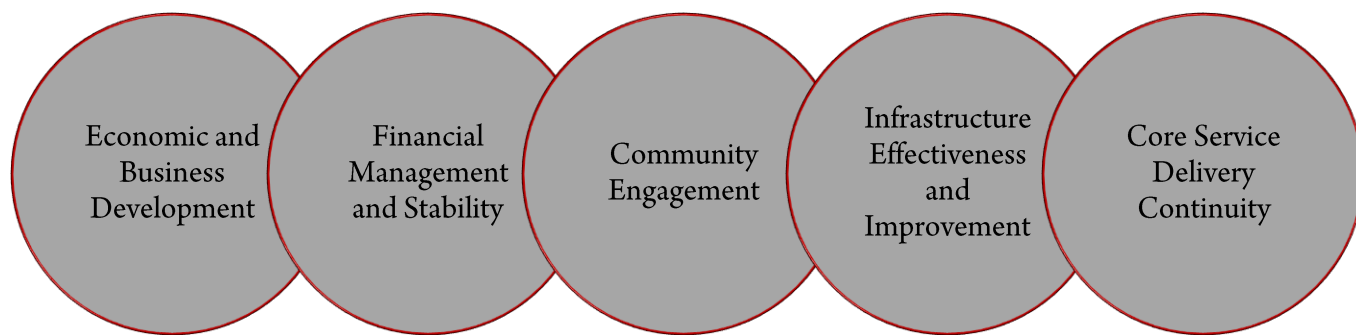
Figure 3. Village of Kirkland 2018-23 Top Three Goals within Each Time and Complexity Quadrant

SHORT-TERM ROUTINE	• Evaluate incentive options to create a business-friendly environment in Kirkland • Create a long-term financial plan for the Village including funding for infrastructure improvements • Village proactively evaluates and develops a capital Improvement plan (CIP) that focuses on short and long-term prioritized infrastructure improvements
SHORT-TERM COMPLEX	• Complete Bull Run Creek Project and maintenance work – The Big Dig- Offer free fill dirt • Encourage/explore options for downtown development to help eliminate vacancies • Complete Hickory Ridge subdivision- Streets, etc., including working with the developer to finish lots
LONG-TERM ROUTINE	• Implement long-term financial plan to ensure economic and community development priorities are accomplished • Develop approaches and options to encourage more community involvement in Kirkland activities, volunteer opportunities, development, etc. • Create/expand a “shop local” program and encourage small businesses including both retention and expansion
LONG-TERM COMPLEX	• Develop and implement a capital improvement plan (CIP) • Encourage new business development in community that creates gathering spaces and helps to keep residents in town for basic needs • Replace Pearl Street bridge; develop plans, estimates and secure funding

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

Several key strategic priority areas surfaced during the sessions and were observable in many of the goal areas (Figure 4). The five thematic strategic priority areas [in no particular order] are economic and business development, financial management and stability, community engagement, infrastructure effectiveness and improvement, and core service delivery continuity.

Figure 4. Strategic Priority Areas



INNOVATIVE IDEAS AND RESOURCES

During Kirkland's strategic planning process, CGS shared potential funding resources and other communities that have undertaken similar projects that the Village of Kirkland may find useful as it implements the action plan. It is important to note that most grant funding is meant to leverage the resources of the Village and not completely cover the cost of any one project. In addition, several of the grant programs for state and federal funding can be temporarily suspended due to availability of finances and other extenuating circumstances, so monitoring funding sources on an on-going basis for availability and due dates will be important. Some of the programs either give priority to, or exclusively fund, 501-C3 non-profits so this may be something the Village explores. This list is by no means exhaustive, but is meant to highlight several areas and programs that align with the goals and needs discussed by the community.

Partnerships with NIU and Kishwaukee College

Partnerships with Kishwaukee and NIU's Department of Biological Sciences for landscaping/horticulture research (i.e., dedicate a specified number of feet around the pond for planting, cultivating, maintaining and researching plant specimens). NIU and Kishwaukee have access to greenhouses, faculty and students to serve communities through outreach programs. They could also serve as an opportunity for students to obtain internships through this type of an outreach program in the Village.



Growing Communities Initiative Toolbox

The Growing Communities Initiative (GCI) Toolbox - is designed to provide tools to help communities address issues, plan and carry out improvement projects, grow businesses and run organizations effectively.



New ways of doing business and changing lifestyle preferences have created many opportunities and challenges for Illinois communities. The Growing Communities Initiative simplifies the route to community growth by providing the tools you need - all in one place. <https://cgs.niu.edu/Growing-Communities/Toolbox/index.shtml>

Think Local

The DeKalb County Community Foundation (DCCF), through the [Community Needs Grant Program](#), invests in the charitable efforts of non-profit and community organizations throughout DeKalb County. Applications are available online for two months immediately prior to the March 1 and September 1 grant deadlines. Applicants requesting \$25,000 or more must contact the Community Foundation Grants Manager, Becky Zantout (815- 748-5383 or becky@dekalbccf.org), by February 1 for the spring grant season or August 1 for the fall grant season. Potential applicants for any grant amount are strongly encouraged to contact the Community Foundation prior to the grant deadline for help facilitating a successful application process. Grants are typically one-time awards supporting projects that will be completed within one year.

The Board has broadly defined the goals and priorities of its Community Needs grant making as follows:

- Promote and enhance organizations whose services benefit the residents of DeKalb County.
- Assist existing agencies to better respond to clearly defined unmet needs within the community.
- Encourage programs and projects that enhance cooperation and collaboration among organizations within DeKalb County. Examples of collaboration include partnering with community organizations, demonstrating community leadership and being a contributing member of the DeKalb County Nonprofit Partnership (DCNP).
- Leverage funds and in-kind support, such as using "seed" money, "match" and "challenge" grants and funds from multiple sources.

Revolving Loan Fund-United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA)

The [Rural Economic Development Loan](#) and Grant program provides funding for rural projects through local utility organizations. USDA provides zero-interest loans to local utilities which they, in turn, pass through to local businesses (ultimate recipients) for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. The ultimate recipients repay the lending utility directly. The utility is responsible for repayment to USDA. USDA provides grants to local utility organizations which use the funding to establish revolving loan funds (RLF). Loans are made from the revolving loan funds to projects that will create or retain rural jobs. When the revolving loan fund is terminated, the grant is repaid to USDA. Funds can be used for many eligible projects including, but not limited to:



- Business incubators
- Community development assistance to nonprofits and public bodies (particularly for job creation or enhancement)
- Facilities and equipment to educate and train rural residents to facilitate economic development
- Facilities and equipment for medical care for rural residents
- Start-up venture costs, including, but not limited to, financing fixed assets such as real estate, buildings, equipment or working capital
- Business expansion
- Technical assistance

Home Rehabilitation-Home Depot [Community Impact Grants](#)

The Home Depot Foundation offers grants, up to \$5,000, to IRS-registered 501c designated organizations and tax-exempt public service agencies in the U.S. that are using the power of volunteers to improve the physical health of their community. Grants are given in the form of Home Depot gift cards for the purchase of tools, materials, or services. The primary goal is to provide grants and volunteer opportunities to support the renovation, refurbishment, retrofitting, accessibility modifications, and/or weatherization of existing homes, centers, schools and other similar facilities.

Illinois Housing Authority- [Revitalization and Repair Program](#)

IHDA understands that investing in homes and communities across the state is an effective way to combat the ongoing effects of the housing crisis and assist with revitalization efforts. IHDA works with local governments and non-profit organizations to offer programs that address vacant residential properties and the blight that usually follows to benefit communities. IHDA also funds programs that allow homeowners to make necessary repairs and accessibility improvements, allowing residents to stay in their homes while improving the quality of single-family housing and helping to create vibrancy in neighborhoods throughout Illinois.

Growing Communities Initiative-Resources and Tools for Local Growth

The Growing Communities Initiative gives Illinois communities easy access to tools and expertise they need to promote community development, downtown enhancement and economic growth. GCI is administered by Northern Illinois University's Center for Governmental Studies. The GCI Toolbox includes articles on innovative projects, information on trends in Illinois communities, templates for entrepreneurs and community organizations, non-profit management guides, historic preservation information, market analysis approaches and more. <http://www.cgs.niu.edu/Growing-Communities>.

Zoning Handbook for Municipal Officials-Illinois Municipal League

This comprehensive handbook explains what zoning is and how to use it in your community. It answers technical questions as well as providing an overview. Options communities can consider are presented and administrative questions addressed. Sample documents are included. <https://www.iml.org/page.cfm?key=2560>

Family Farmed-Farm to Table Dinner Events

Family Farmed provides an annual guide to farm to table dinners within 200 miles of Chicago. The dinners are held throughout the designated geographic area, each setting its unique prices, style, and menu. Seating is by reservation and dinners frequently sell out. See <http://www.familyfarmed.org/farm-dinners/> for more information.

Illinois Made-Illinois Tourism Bureau

Illinois Tourism Bureau promotes attractions and events throughout the state. Its *Illinois Made* program markets unique Illinois products of interest to visitors. Criteria for inclusion in this program are available at <https://www.enjoyillinois.com/illinois-made/illinois-made-criteria/>

Illinois Safe Routes to School Program

Many rural communities lack or have limited financial and human resources to carry out to address aging infrastructure such as sidewalks. However, a safe and complete sidewalk network provides several benefits to communities including improving mobility and walkability for all residents and visitors, encouraging healthy lifestyles, serving recreational uses, and promoting commerce and economic development.



Through the Illinois Safe Routes to School Program many projects may be eligible for funding. Eligible infrastructure projects include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming/speed reduction improvements, traffic control devices, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle facilities, and secure bicycle parking facilities. Eligible non-infrastructure projects include events, equipment, and supplies that help to address areas of Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, and Evaluation. <http://www.idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/local-transportation-partners/county-engineers-and-local-public-agencies/safe-routes-to-school/index>

CONCLUSION

This report's value will be realized if it is used as an active working guide to the Kirkland Board and community members as they pursue the issues explored during the strategic planning process. This report is designed to capture the content of the discussions and to assist the Village in developing action plans in follow-up sessions for appropriate committees and elected officers.

The next step is for the Village Board to review the process and outcomes to this point. Kirkland's Board, in partnership with Village staff, will continue to work on objectives in their ongoing action-planning sessions and regularly scheduled Board meetings. Responsibility for completing the action steps will include individuals who can take the lead in implementing the goals: Board members, staff, community members and volunteers.

What is apparent from the exchange of ideas and dialogue during the input gathering and discussion sessions is that the Village is fortunate to have progressive leadership that is looking ahead. One noted observer summarized the challenges of progress this way:

*"The art of progress is to preserve order amid change,
and change amid order..." -A.N. Whitehead*

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

Melissa Henriksen and Greg Kuhn, Jeanna Ballard, Session Facilitators, NIU Center for Governmental Studies

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Melissa Henriksen".

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Kuhn".

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanna Ballard".

APPENDIX A: VILLAGE OF KIRKLAND FOCUS GROUP DATA

One of the key analytical techniques used for focus group notes is an analyst's search for key phrases, words, or terms that cut across all groups. Coding is done by analysts' individual readings of the data, followed by key term searches with the aid of document software. The words and phrases listed below present the results of the study team's analysis of the collected focus group 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 are revealing because they highlight 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/outreach sessions. The sessions were designed to serve 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 Board and staff to consider during the strategic planning workshop sessions.

The same six exploratory focus group discussion questions asked to each focus group are listed below:

1. How would you describe the Village of Kirkland to a stranger or someone who doesn't live or work here?
2. If you left Kirkland tomorrow, and didn't return for 15-20 years, what do you think you'll see, or what do you hope you'll see, when you return?
3. What do you like best about the Village of Kirkland? Related to that, what are the strengths/greatest assets of the Village?
4. Can you identify areas or topics in need of attention or improvement? Related to that, what are the weaknesses/greatest needs in Kirkland? Challenges?
5. What are/should be the top priorities for the Village over the next 3-5 years?
6. If you could change or initiate one key item or thing about the Village, what would it be?

Overall Themes

The data below were derived from the analysis of the bundled focus group data. Using qualitative analysis techniques such as reviews of phrases, developing sorting categories, and conducting word counts, the following comment themes, topics, and phrases surfaced. *Note: Some categories, topics, and phrases that were seen as closely related by the analysts were combined for the theme/phrase/word counts presented below.*

1. **How would you describe the Village of Kirkland to a stranger or someone who doesn't live or work here?**
 - Frequent Themes or Phrases
 - Small town/quiet/farm town/charm/nice place to call home (16)
 - Community feel/friendly people/churches (8)
 - Change resistant/would like to see growth (7)
 - Location/near DeKalb, Belvidere (6)
 - Amenities/restaurants/events/parks (6)
 - Infrastructure needs improvement/sidewalks/potholes (2)
 - Schools/educational opportunities (2)
2. **If you left Kirkland tomorrow, and did not return for 10-15 years, what do you think you'll see, or what do you hope you'll see, when you return?**

- Frequent Themes or Phrases

- Small town/quiet/farm town/charm/nice place to call home (16)
- Community feel/friendly people/churches (8)
- Change resistant/would like to see growth (7)
- Location/near DeKalb, Belvidere (6)
- Amenities/restaurants/events/parks (6)
- Infrastructure needs improvement/sidewalks/potholes (2)
- Schools/educational opportunities (2)

3. What do you like best about the Village of Kirkland? Related to that, what are the strengths/greatest assets of the Village?

- Frequent Themes or Phrases

- Close knit, caring community/active civic engagement/churches/community events (17)
- Supportive businesses/stores/local shops (11)
- Leadership/village management (4)
- Recreation (3)
- Rural/agriculture (3)
- Schools/education/opportunity (3)
- Safe town/location (2)
- Infrastructure (1)

4. Can you identify areas or topics in need of attention or improvement? Related to that, what are the weaknesses/greatest needs in Village of Kirkland? Challenges?

- Frequent Themes or Phrases

- In town entertainment/events/community apathy/community involvement (18)
- Youth engagement/activities/education opportunities (11)
- Location/Chicago/State of Illinois (6)
- Infrastructure/wastewater/growth (5)
- Budgeting/financials/tax base (4)
- Small town politics/re-establish trust (3)
- Library (3)
- Parks (3)
- Employment/Need more opportunities (1)
- Regional rivalry/opportunity for collaboration (1)

5. What are/should be the top priorities for the Village over the next 3-5 years?

- Frequent Themes or Phrases

- Community activities/community center/recreation (18)
- Business/economic growth (16)
- Reinvest in infrastructure (14)
- Regional collaboration (6)
- Downtown revitalization/beautification (5)
- Employment (4)

- Preserve history/identity/GiveBack Day/marketing (4)

6. If you could change or initiate one key item or thing about the Village, what would it be?

- Frequent Themes or Phrases

- Reinvest in infrastructure/sidewalks/roads (10)
- Downtown revitalization/beautification/makeover (6)
- Business/economic growth (7)
- Employment/opportunities for all (3)

APPENDIX B: VILLAGE OF KIRKLAND PRIORITIZED SHORT- AND LONG-TERM GOALS*

*Lower the group average, the higher the goal is ranked.

Village of Kirkland Strategic Goal Rankings 2018		
Short-Term Routine		
GROUP AVG	GOAL ID #	GOAL
2.6	STR- 1	Evaluate incentive options to create a business-friendly environment in Kirkland- Lower cost of industrial land/lots that may include tax incentives
2.6	STR- 3	Create a long-term financial plan for the Village including funding for infrastructure improvements
2.9	STR- 2	Village proactively evaluates and develops a capital Improvement plan (CIP) that focuses on short and long-term prioritized infrastructure improvements
3.3	STR- 6	Explore downtown beautification strategies that would have an immediate impact on the appearance of the Village such as flowers/planters, awnings, façade grant program, etc.
5.4	STR- 5	Create and implement a community clean-up day and include local partners, i.e., school district
5.6	STR- 7	Capitalize on recreational assets in the Village, i.e., river, canoe launch rental- Identify funding sources, identify assets, explore volunteers
6.4	STR- 8	Explore and evaluate options for a walking path around Behnke Park and Kirkwood Subdivision
7.3	STR- 4	Explore establishing a dog park section in a current Village-owned park
Short-Term Complex		
GROUP AVG	GOAL ID #	GOAL
2.7	STC- 4	Complete Bull Run Creek Project and maintenance work – The Big Dig- Offer free fill dirt
3.4	STC- 7	Encourage/explore options for downtown development to help eliminate vacancies- Look at other communities for success stories, explore creative solutions and funding sources
3.6	STC- 5	Complete Hickory Ridge subdivision- Streets, etc., work with developer to finish lots
3.9	STC- 1	Work with businesses on the implementation of downtown beautification and façade improvements that may involve policy evaluation, zoning, etc.
4.9	STC- 2	Complete the building of the Kirkland Community Center
5.0	STC- 3	Improve park utilization by Village residents and visitors (especially Village-owned parks)- Including program creation, quality of life, walking paths, etc.- Explore creating true park district programs to help keep money in Kirkland
6.0	STC- 8	Create a walking path around Behnke Park and Kirkwood Subdivision
6.6	STC- 6	Explore a Stop-N-go option

Village of Kirkland Strategic Goal Rankings 2018

Long-Term Routine

GROUP AVG	GOAL ID #	GOAL
1.9	LTR - 4	Implement long-term financial plan to ensure economic and community development priorities are accomplished
2.4	LTR - 1	Develop approaches and options to encourage more community involvement in Kirkland activities, volunteer opportunities, development, etc.
2.4	LTR - 2	Create/expand a "shop local" program and encourage small businesses including both retention and expansion
3.7	LTR - 3	Create new development codes and evaluate/modify current codes to encourage development that complements the current historic downtown
4.6	LTR - 5	Develop rail line extension to encourage industrial and other opportunities

Long-Term Complex

GROUP AVG	GOAL ID #	GOAL
1.9	LTC - 1	Implement a capital improvement plan (CIP)- Take steps to assure the implementation of a long-term infrastructure plan to be ready for industrial/commercial growth including roads, sewer, water, and rail spur- Create/Build Well #4 as part of an infrastructure plan- Complete replacement/maintenance of all sidewalks and streets
3.6	LTC - 6	Encourage new business development in community that creates gathering spaces and helps to keep residents in town for basic needs- Coffeehouse, McDonald's as a late night food/snack options, Hardware Store, mechanic, etc.
3.9	LTC - 2	Replace Pearl Street bridge; develop plans, estimates and secure funding
4.1	LTC - 9	Develop an economic development strategy; explore and implement creative solutions/incentives to filling industrial lots and increasing living-wage jobs in the Village
5.6	LTC - 4	Build a Splash pad in Village creating activities that encourage residents/visitors to stay and play in the Village
5.7	LTC - 8	Create and implement a long-term recreational plan including walking paths, splash pad, parks, tying trails into the State park, possible campground, etc.- Explore using old boy scout camp to create a green space/open space with trails, park, etc.
6.1	LTC - 7	Implement a rail line extension to encourage industrial and other opportunities
6.6	LTC - 5	Construct a new gym facility (multi-use, all ages) on school property but open to the public - Facility could include AstroTurf, courts, after school activities, workouts, etc.
7.6	LTC - 3	Build a swimming pool in Village possibly in collaboration with the park district