



2023 – 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

PROGRESS REPORT #5 OCTOBER 2025



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ELECTED OFFICIALS & STAFF

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Thomas B. Hood – Mayor

Andy Harris – Village Clerk

Jeanne Balmes – Trustee

Greg Garner – Trustee

Quin O'Brien – Trustee

Cheryl Ross – Trustee

Karen Thorstenson – Trustee

Kevin Woodside – Trustee

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Patrick Muetz – Village Administrator

David Ziegler – Director of Community Development

Brian Smith – Police Chief

John Kavanagh – Fire Chief

Heather Galan – Public Works Director

Brian Gosnell – Finance Director

Ellen Dean – Economic Development Director

Christine Palmieri – Human Resources Director

Ryan Nelson – Information Systems Director

Nick Leach – Village Engineer

Austin Pollack – Assistant to the Village Administrator

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OVERVIEW

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVE

Realizing the importance of establishing a sound base for future financial and non-financial decision-making in an ever-changing environment, the Village of Gurnee embarked on an initiative to create a formalized strategic plan in late-2007. During the initiative, Vision and Mission Statements were developed, as were a set of Core Values and Village-wide Strategic Goals. The plan resulted in significant improvements in the areas of economic development, capital infrastructure, external communication, community and intergovernmental partnerships, and land use policies, to name a few.

With a number of years passing since the 2007 initiative, the Village embarked on a strategic plan update in 2015. The resulting 2017 - 2021 Strategic Plan was the catalyst for innovation in departments, improvements in public safety, expansion of pedestrian facilities and enhancements to infrastructure to name a few.

The 2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan further builds upon this progress through twenty-four Strategic Initiatives. The plan reflects Gurnee's priorities, commitment to measurable results and delivery of quality services.

2023 – 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE TO DATE

- November 21, 2021 – Professional Service Agreement with Rapp Consulting Group Approved
- February – March 2022 – Community Survey & Internal Staff Survey
- March 16 – 18, 2022 – Six Community Focus Group Sessions
- May 20, 2022 – Village Board and Leadership Staff Planning Retreat
- November 11, 2022 – 2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan formally adopted via Ordinance 2022-63
- August 28, 2023 – Progress Report #1 presented to the Village Board
- March 11, 2024 – Progress Report #2 provided to the Village Board via the FY 24/25 Budget
- October 28, 2024 – Progress Report #3 presented to the Village Board
- March 3, 2025 – Progress Report #4 provided to the Village Board via the FY 24/25 Budget
- October 27, 2025 – Progress Report #5 presented to the Village Board

BIANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Twice a year Village staff will report on progress related to completing Action Steps within each Initiative. These reports are anticipated to take place in the fall and spring (in conjunction with the budget process) and will include an updated 2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan Progress Report, as well as formal presentation to the Village Board at a public meeting. The report is designed to give the user a firm understanding of the Initiatives underway, progress to date and next steps. The report will be shared on the Village's website (gurnee.il.us) and social media accounts.



= Action Step Complete



= Progress Made

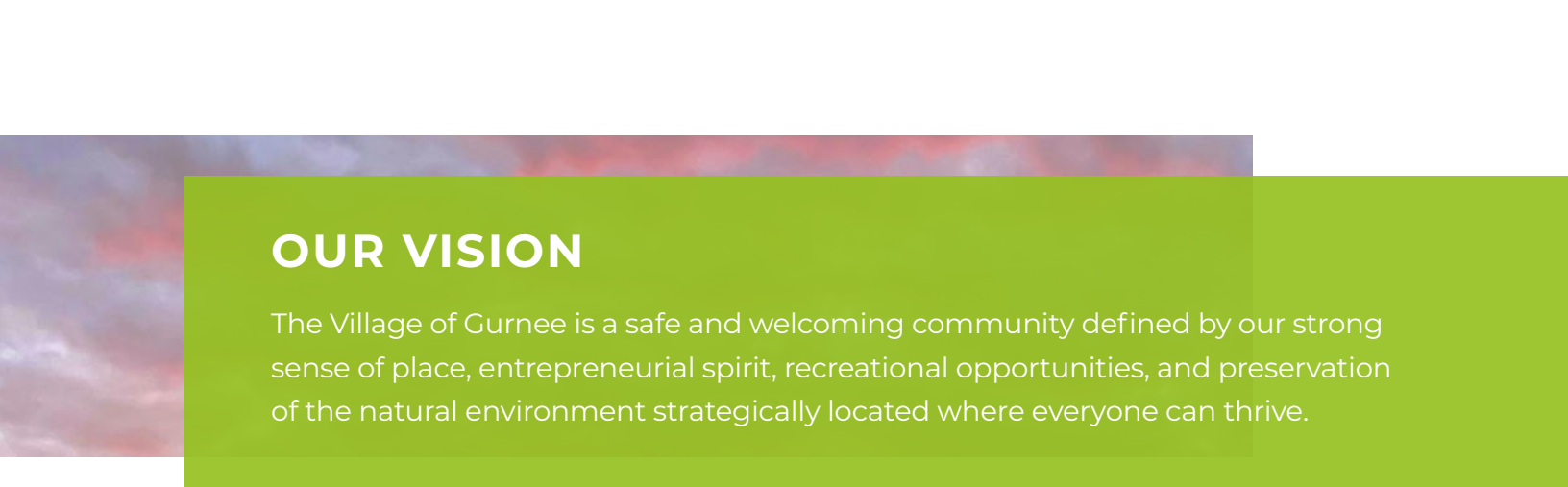


= No Progress to Date

STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY 2023–2026

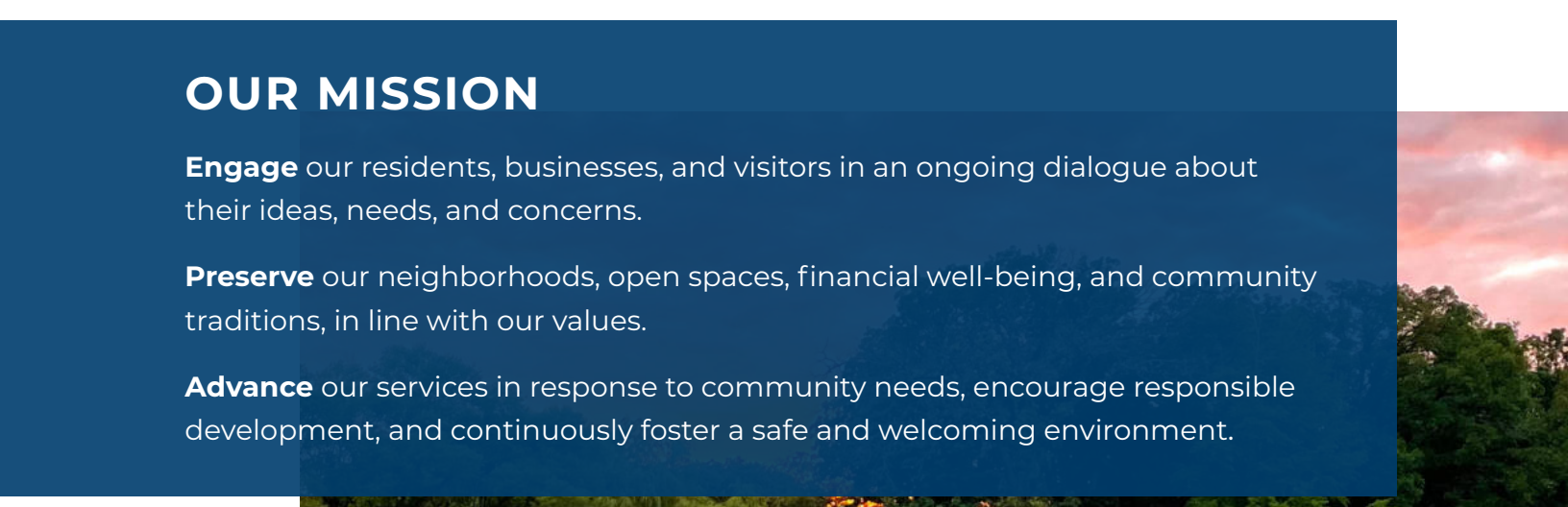
Village of Gurnee

Strategic Priority	Desired Outcome	Key Outcome Indicator	Target	Strategic Initiatives
Fiscal Sustainability <i>A financially responsible organization</i>	Reduced reliance on the Big Three	- # of new tax generating businesses - Big Three tax-overall tax change	- Big Three share of overall taxes reduced 5% by 2025	a) Develop fiscal growth and redevelopment strategy b) Develop and implement a Market Opportunity Plan c) Formalize a business retention program d) Create new strategy for operational effectiveness
	Cost effective operations	- Cycle time reductions - Efficiency improvements - Cost reductions	- 3 service improvements 2023-2026 - 10% operational cost savings 2023-2026	
	Successful business retention & attraction	- Revenue Generation - Employment Opportunities - Variety of goods & services	- Key Revenues and Employment increase in line with regional economic growth - Proportion among business sectors is maintained	
Well-Maintained Infrastructure <i>Infrastructure that supports our community</i>	Current infrastructure quality maintained	- Condition rating changes - Replacement schedule compliance	- Attain a PCI of 60 for road conditions by 2025 - Meet Village Utility replacement schedules	a) Develop annual Capital Plan for Pavement Improvements b) Develop Village Utility Reliability Plan c) Create Pedestrian Improvement Plan d) Perform a comprehensive Standards and Mandate assessment
	Infrastructure that meets community needs	- Water system reliability standards met - Continued completion of Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations	- Decrease percentage of homes without access to public water/sewer by 2025 - Prepare a meter change out program by 2025 - Decrease the number of dead end water mains by 3 by looping 3 by 2025 - Complete one pedestrian improvement project per year	
	Infrastructure meets key standards and mandates	- Number of standards met	- Increase number of new standards met within the next 3 years	
Effective Communication <i>A transparent, responsive government</i>	A well-informed community	- # of Communication plans deployed - # of social media/platform hits	- > 90% say they feel Village communicates well by 2025	a) Conduct Resident Satisfaction Survey b) Create Interdepartmental Communications team structure c) Develop data-driven communications program d) Develop Constituent Service Program
	A community that trusts the Village	- # of educational communication items deployed - Positive survey results	-> 90% say they trust the Village	
	An engaged community	- # of engagement events	- Increase # of engagements by 10% from 2023-2026	
A Stable, well-trained workforce <i>A capable, dedicated workforce</i>	Improved workforce diversity	- Diversity of workforce	- 20% of new hires 2023-2026 are diverse	a) Update and implement compensation and non-compensation plan b) Increase training opportunities for operational effectiveness c) Implement Professional Development Pathways for Management Positions d) Update recruiting and retention efforts with a focus on diversity to meet the need of the next generation workforce
	Well-trained workforce	- % increase training hours - % of employees meeting training targets	- 75% of all employees meet training targets by 2025	
	Stable workforce	- Staffing targets met - Turnover rate	- Department specific succession plan in every department by 2024	
A Safe Community <i>A safe, secure community</i>	The capacity to meet community safety expectations	- # vacant positions - Time to fill vacancies reduced	- 95% of budgeted public safety positions filled by 2024	a) Create a Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Plan b) Develop Public Safety Community Engagement Program c) Create Stakeholder Relationship Strategy d) Update comprehensive Major Incident Training Plan
	Increased feeling of safety in the community	- Increased # of units and programs - Positive feedback results	- Restore community-based units and programs to pre-pandemic levels by 2025 - Greater than 95% say they feel safe	
	Major incident preparedness	- # Intradepartmental training events - % of personnel NIMS trained	- 50% of units and people fully trained for major incidents by 2025	
Lifestyle Vitality <i>A connected, welcoming community</i>	Improved community connectedness	- # of community events - # of neighborhood events	- Increase # of annual community events by 3 between 2022-2025 - Increase annual block permits by 10% annually, 2022-2025	a) Develop Small Business/Community Partnership program b) Establish and support events in partnership with community and neighborhood organizations c) Develop relationship with regional multi-cultural agencies d) Create opportunities for community engagement around strategic priorities
	Vibrant small business community	- Increase in small business/community connectedness	- Increase # of small business events and programs by 3 by 2025	
	Demonstrated commitment to diversity	- Increase in workforce diversity - Increase in Board/Commission diversity	- > 70% indicating Village's commitment to diversity is evident - 10 % increase in diverse candidates appointed to Boards or Commissions 2022-2025	



OUR VISION

The Village of Gurnee is a safe and welcoming community defined by our strong sense of place, entrepreneurial spirit, recreational opportunities, and preservation of the natural environment strategically located where everyone can thrive.



OUR MISSION

Engage our residents, businesses, and visitors in an ongoing dialogue about their ideas, needs, and concerns.

Preserve our neighborhoods, open spaces, financial well-being, and community traditions, in line with our values.

Advance our services in response to community needs, encourage responsible development, and continuously foster a safe and welcoming environment.



OUR VALUES

Customer Focused

- Treat all with courtesy and respect
- Fairness and consistency in all our interactions
- Conduct all our business in a transparent manner

Leadership

- Take accountability for our actions
- Conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity
- Support personal development and growth

Progressive

- Forward thinking and creative in what we do
- Embrace change that improves our services
- Open to learning and new ways of thinking

Collaborative

- Facilitate partnerships that improve community and service
- Promote a team-oriented culture
- Share power and credit

Stewardship

- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility
- Maintain the integrity of Village assets
- Preserve Village traditions

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR FY 2023 - 2026

Fiscal Sustainability

- 1.1 Develop fiscal growth and redevelopment strategy
- 1.2 Develop and implement a new Business Attraction Plan
- 1.3 Formalize a business retention program
- 1.4 Create a new strategy for operational effectiveness and efficiencies

Well-Maintained Infrastructure

- 2.1 Develop annual Capital Plan for Pavement Improvements - **COMPLETED**
- 2.2 Develop Village Utility Reliability Plan
- 2.3 Update Pedestrian Improvement Plan
- 2.4 Perform a comprehensive Standards and Mandate assessment

Effective Communication

- 3.1 Conduct resident satisfaction survey - **COMPLETED**
- 3.2 Create interdepartmental communications team structure - **COMPLETED**
- 3.3 Develop data-driven communications program - **COMPLETED**
- 3.4 Develop Constituent Service Program

A Stable, well-trained workforce

- 4.1 Update and implement compensation and non-compensation plan - **COMPLETED**
- 4.2 Increase training opportunities for operational effectiveness
- 4.3 Implement professional development pathways for management positions - **COMPLETED**
- 4.4 Update recruiting and retention efforts with a focus on diversity to meet the needs of next generation workforce - **COMPLETED**

A Safe Community

- 5.1 Create a Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Plan - **COMPLETED**
- 5.2 Develop a public safety community engagement program
- 5.3 Create stakeholder relationship strategy
- 5.4 Update Comprehensive Major Incident Training Plan - **COMPLETED**

Lifestyle Vitality

- 6.1 Develop Village/small business partnership program - **COMPLETED**
- 6.2 Establish and support events in partnership with community and neighborhood Organizations
- 6.3 Develop relationship with regional multi-cultural agencies
- 6.4 Create opportunities for community engagement around strategic priorities - **COMPLETED**

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Strategic Priority: Fiscal Sustainability

Initiative 1.1: Develop fiscal growth and redevelopment strategy

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Develop a report on greatest revenue base risks, ideal and current tax mix, and needed diversification for inclusion in the Market Opportunity Plan	Reproducible report	Finance Director	January 2023
2. Develop report on Big 3 (Six Flags Great America, Great Wolf Lodge, Gurnee, Mills) share of each tax type and report regularly	Reproducible report	Finance Director	April 2023
3. Compile list with descriptions and applicability of business taxes (Tax Portfolio)	Completed list	Finance Director	April 2023
4. Calculate current tax generated per square foot for existing uses to measure future tax generation potential	Tax generated by industry analysis	Finance Director	October 2023
5. Identify other available parcels and measure potential impact on tax mix based on various scenarios (Use Impact Matrix)	Completed matrix tool	Economic Development & Finance Directors	July 2024
6. Identify sites suitable for “Downtown-like” gathering space and higher density housing options that meet workforce and generational demands	Sites Evaluated	Economic Development & Community Development Directors	July 2024
7. Complete a combined listing of available properties with ranked uses and potential incentives. Desired future state	Completed list	Economic Development & Finance Directors	January 2025

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

A growth and redevelopment strategy is the blueprint for business attraction and retention efforts. The strategy lays out where we are currently and outlines a desired future state by identifying fiscal vulnerabilities and the impact of potential uses for available properties.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 1.1: Develop fiscal growth and redevelopment strategy

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Draft report for calendar year 2024 complete.
2.	✓	Creation of the “Big 3” Report has been completed for calendar year 2024 included with item #1.
3.	✓	The Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) compiled a list of taxes available to municipalities both home rule and non-home rule. With that report as the basis Finance supplemented with local options outside of IDOR.
4.	🕒	Calculation of current tax generated per square foot for existing uses is dependent on Action Step #5.
5.	✓	The Finance Division worked with the GIS Coordinator to create a reproducible “tax heat map” to identify any deficiencies or synergy amongst commercial areas.
6.	🕒	The ‘Triangle’ site – 44.18 acres south of Six Flags – is being actively marketed as a Mixed-Use Entertainment development. An enhanced LoopNet listing; targeted outreach to developers and end-users; and developer tours and meetings are ongoing. Focus is on retail/dining/entertainment but multi-family is an anticipated necessary component of the Triangle mixed-use development. Multi-family development and redevelopment projects on smaller, infill sites have progressed in 2025.
7.	🕒	Development of a list of available properties is available. The desired future state with ranked uses and potential incentives is dependent on prior Action Steps.

Strategic Priority: Fiscal Sustainability

Initiative 1.2: Develop and implement a new Business Attraction Plan

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Conduct assessment of permitting and zoning processes to identify needs for heightened environmental or safety review or opportunities for streamlining	Completed assessment	Community Development Director & Management Assistant	July 2023
2. Implement procedural modifications; update ordinances as needed	Modified procedures; updated ordinances	Community Development Director & Management Assistant	December 2023
3. Identify a list/map of target properties for development/redevelopment (Property Portfolio)	Completed property portfolio	Economic Development & Community Development Directors	January 2024
4. Complete a business category heat map. Shows business types geographically	Completed business category heat map	Finance Director & GIS Coordinator	July 2024
5. Complete tax generation heat map for each tax type. Taxes generated by type and volume geographically	Completed tax generation heat map	Finance Director & GIS Coordinator	July 2024
6. Identify ideal use and potential incentive type for available target properties for development	Completed property portfolio	Economic Development & Community Development Directors	July 2025

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

The Fiscal Growth & Redevelopment Strategy guides the Village as to what we need to attract and why to maintain the ideal tax mix to minimize fiscal risk. The Business Attraction Plan identifies what tools are available and how we are going to attract or retain the type of businesses needed or desired. Permitting/zoning processes that are straightforward and fair, while ensuring the safety of the natural and built environments, encourage responsible development and business operation.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 1.2: Develop and implement a new Business Attraction Plan

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.		Internal assessment of permitting and zoning processes has not yet started due to staffing levels in the Planning Division. Will be included in GPIC once the Assistant to the Community Development Director position is on-board.
2.		Staff continues to identify text amendments to the 2015 Zoning Ordinance aimed at clarifying items and streamlining processes. These text amendments are reviewed by the Planning & Zoning Board prior to Village Board consideration. The final 2024 ICC Building Codes were delivered in September of 2024. Staff will review these codes and recommend adoption with the goal of minimal local amendments.
3.		Formal mapping of target properties is currently underway in conjunction with the GIS Coordinator. Six specific target sites for restaurant recruitment were identified in the context of a contract with Mallon & Associates for restaurant/retail recruitment.
4.		Development of a Tax heat map and business-type map is complete.
5.		The Finance Division worked with GIS Coordinator to create a reproducible “tax heat map” to identify any deficiencies or synergy amongst commercial areas.
6.		Identification of ideal uses and incentive types for target properties has not yet started as it is dependent upon Action Step #3 above.

Strategic Priority: Fiscal Sustainability

Initiative 1.3: Formalize a business retention program

ACTION STEPS		MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1.	Develop a monthly report for the economic development team that identifies the largest tax payers in the Big 4 tax categories (Sales, Amusement, Hotel, F&B Tax)	Reproducible report	Finance Director	January 2024
2.	Enhance and fund the small business capital grant program	Updated program	Economic Development & Finance Directors	May 2024
3.	Develop a business communications plan to engage with business via economic development and communications	Completed plan	Economic Development Director & Assistant to the Village Administrator	May 2024
4.	Develop business group that meets regularly with the Village (i.e.: business summit)	Regular meetings held	Economic Development Director	January 2025

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

As part of the overall Fiscal Growth and Redevelopment Strategy, retaining the current tax base is important. Formalizing a Business Retention Program in line with the priorities identified in the Fiscal Growth and Redevelopment Strategy will help direct resources and retention efforts.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 1.3: Formalize a business retention program

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	The development of a monthly taxpayer report for the Economic Development Team is complete. The report includes top taxpayers for each major revenue category.
2.	✓	The Village Board funded the SBCG program for fourth year in a row, with a total appropriation of \$1.25 million since inception in FY 2021/2022. Program was evaluated and amended to support two Transformational Capital Projects annually with minimum investment of \$100,000. As of 10/01/25, since inception, \$1.02 million has been awarded to 56 businesses with a total project investment of over \$5.4 million.
3.	🕒	Ongoing. Periodic Business Partner letters include information on financial resources or topics of interest. <i>Gurnee's Got It</i> participates in the monthly Village Communications Plan.
4.	✗	Development of a Business Group that meets regularly with the Village has not yet started. The Village of Gurnee Chamber of Commerce is a helpful resource in this regard; the Economic Development Director and/or Community Engagement Coordinator attend all board meetings and events. Additionally, the 2025 Business Survey provided useful feedback and benchmarking.

Strategic Priority: Fiscal Sustainability

Initiative 1.4: Create new strategy for operational effectiveness and efficiencies

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Schedule meetings with Departments to identify one business process to review in each service area	One business process identified in each department	Finance Director	November 2023
2. Identify work groups to review identified processes. Group includes Finance, Admin/IS, two department representatives	Work groups established	Finance Director	February 2024
3. Kickoff Meeting with each work group – project purpose and goals; roles and responsibilities	Meetings held	Finance Director	May 2024
4. Map current state – time and resources allocated to each step. Series of meetings and independent research	Visual flow-chart of current state of process	Work Group	November 2024
5. Research technology, peer processes, resources, feedback to streamline process - Identify customer impact	Report identifying technology and streamlining opportunities	Work Group	May 2025
6. Map future state – apply research to reduce time and resources needed for business process or improve customer experience	Application/ process reviewed and changes implemented	Work Group	November 2025
7. Produce Final Implementation Plan – Identifies steps and resources needed to achieve future state, with cost savings and resource allocation	Implementation Plan complete and presented to leadership	Work Group	January 2026

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Over time business processes can become cumbersome and expensive as steps are added to fit various short-term needs. With Village resources becoming more scarce and expensive, it is important to constantly evaluate business processes to ensure the most cost effective practices are in place to meet customer expectations and avoid the “way we’ve always done it” mindset. This evaluation will consider developments in technology, evolving standards of business practices and changing customer expectations.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 1.4: Create new strategy for operational effectiveness and efficiencies

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Processes in each department have been submitted for consideration. Examples of projects to be reviewed include the permitting process and utility billing work orders.
2.	✗	Work groups have not yet been identified. Development of these groups is dependent on the Action Step #1.
3.	🕒	A PowerPoint presentation reviewing the objectives and end –goals has been developed. It will be presented to the work groups once they are identified under Action Step #2.
4.	✗	Current state mapping has not yet started as it is dependent on prior Action Steps.
5.	✗	Research has not yet started as it is dependent on prior Action Steps.
6.	✗	Future state mapping has not yet started as it is dependent on prior Action Steps.
7.	✗	Final Implementation Plan development has not yet started as it is dependent on prior Action Steps.

Strategic Priority: Well-Maintained Infrastructure

Initiative 2.1: Develop annual Capital Plan for Pavement Improvements

ACTION STEPS		MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1.	Utilize road condition data to guide selection of streets for resurfacing or reconstruction	Draft list of roads generated	Village Engineer & Community Development Director	Annually in November
2.	Review community and departmental road concerns and modify list as necessary	Staff review complete; list updated as necessary	Village Engineer & Community Development Director	Annually in December
3.	Classify selected roads for reconstruction or resurfacing candidates and group by region with estimated costs	One list created for resurfacing and one for reconstruction	Village Engineer & Community Development Director	Annually in January
4.	Review/compare estimated costs to available budget	Consensus with Finance on funds for roads	Village Engineer, Finance Director & Village Administrator	Annually in January
5.	Bid project, select contractor, present recommendation to Village Board and award the project	Contract awarded	Village Engineer & Village Administrator	Annually in April
6.	Supervise construction and close road	Project successfully completed	Village Engineer & Engineers	Annually May - September
7.	Perform pavement condition assessment and recalculate overall road condition	Updated road conditions & overall road condition	Village Engineer & Engineers	Annually September - October

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Maintaining the transportation systems in the Village of Gurnee is typically the largest budgetary line item in the capital plan. The Village's roadway network consists of paved local roadways equivalent to about 121 centerline miles. Typical capital roadway projects include preventative maintenance, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Continued proactive maintenance in the form of resurfacing allows more roads to be maintained in a given fiscal year. As roads age without resurfacing, they require complete reconstruction, which is more costly. The process of evaluating and selecting roads for capital improvements is essential to maintaining an appropriate overall road condition in the Village.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 2.1: Develop annual Capital Plan for Pavement Improvements

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	The Village performed an overall PCI survey of the road network for FY 26. As of October 2025, the average PCI rating for the Village was 71 (Good). This rating has improved 10 points since 2024 which was an overall rating of 61 (Fair). The Engineering Division has started a preliminary review of the PCI rating for roads for selection in the FY 26/27 road program.
2.	✓	Ongoing action step that is completed annually. In December 2025 the Engineering Division will have a meeting to discuss selected roads to create a <i>pre-final</i> list. The Division will seek information from what “employees on the street” have seen, as well as discuss resident complaints that have been received.
3.	✓	Ongoing action step that is completed annually. Once Action Step #2 is completed staff will classify selected roads for reconstruction or resurfacing and group by region with estimated costs.
4.	✓	Ongoing action step that is completed annually. Once Action Step #3 is completed staff will meet with the Finance Director to discuss available budget and finalize road program.
5.	✓	Ongoing action step that is completed annually. Bidding the work and selecting a contractor requires the completion of prior Action Steps. Historically a recommendation is presented to the Village Board for consideration in late-March/early-April.
6.	✓	Ongoing action step that is completed annually. Supervising the construction and closing out the project requires the completion of prior Action Steps. Construction historically begins in early-summer and is completed by fall. During this time staff, as well as outside consultants, supervise construction.
7.	✓	Ongoing action step that is completed annually. Follow-up pavement condition assessment and recalculated PCI requires the completion of prior Action Steps. The assessment takes place after construction has been completed for the year.

Strategic Priority: Well-Maintained Infrastructure

Initiative 2.2: Develop Village Utility Reliability Plan

ACTION STEPS		MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1.	Identify utilities to be included in Reliability Plan (Sanitary sewer, water, street lighting, etc.)	Comprehensive list of Village utilities for inclusion in plan	Public Works Director, Village Engineer & Community Development Director	June 2023
2.	Identify & prioritize utility reliability improvements	Prioritized list of utility reliability improvements	Public Works Director, Village Engineer & Community Development Director	January 2024
3.	Review life cycles defined in the Capital Plan and compare them to industry standard life cycles & historical replacement schedules of assets	Summary document (life cycles vs historical average)	Public Works Director & Village Engineer	June 2024
4.	Generate list of proposed minimum capital improvements per year to meet standard life cycles & estimated costs	Draft list prepared	Public Works Director & Village Engineer	December 2024
5.	Review financing and staffing required to meet these goals	Draft capital plan and staffing plan	Public Works Director, Village Engineer & Finance Director	June 2025
6.	Present to Village Administration & Finance for approval	Plan presented	Public Works Director, Village Engineer & Finance Director	December 2025
7.	Update the multi-year capital plan and present to Village Board	Updated capital plan with Village Board concurrence	Public Works Director, Village Engineer & Finance Director	January 2026

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Having reliable infrastructure is essential to maintaining service to customers. The Village manages several utilities and maintenance costs of those utilities typically compete for the same funds in the budget and the same staff group's time. Identifying the investment and staffing needed to stay on top of replacement schedules and life cycles will better prepare the Village to consistently maintain infrastructure. It will also help to identify the impacts of pushing back improvements due to lack of funding or available staff.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 2.2: Develop Village Utility Reliability Plan

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Engineering met with Public Works staff to generate a comprehensive list of Village utilities for inclusion in the Village's Capital plan for FY 25/26.
2.	✓	Public Works and Engineering staff prioritized the utility reliability improvements for watermain and sanitary sewer as part of the Capital Plan.
3.	✓	Reviewed the life cycles defined in the Capital Plan and compared them to industry standard life cycles & historical replacement schedules to select quantity of utilities to target annually.
4.	✓	Generated a list of capital improvements for FY25/26 as part of the budget process and will update annually.
5.	✓	Reviewed financing and staffing needs as part of FY25/26 budget. Hired consultants to supplement staffing to watch over construction projects. Will evaluate annually through the budget process.
6.	✓	The Capital Plan was presented to Finance and Administration as part of the annual budget process and will continue annually thereafter.
7.	✓	Presentation to Village Board of the Multi-Year Capital Plan was completed as part of the FY25/26 budget process and will continue annually thereafter.

Strategic Priority: Well-Maintained Infrastructure

Initiative 2.3: Update Pedestrian Improvement Plan

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Review Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) list and prioritize feasibility for pedestrian paths within Village of Gurnee	List is reviewed and reprioritized if needed	Village Engineer & Community Development Director	July 2023
2. Meet with Departments to review pedestrian needs or concerns, accommodating resident requests where feasible	Departments review list and agree on prioritization	Public Works Director & Village Engineer	September 2023 & annually
3. Select pedestrian paths to build for upcoming fiscal year	Path identified for budget inclusion	Public Works Director, Village Engineer & Community Development Director	September 2023 & annually
4. Select consultant to design and acquire permitting for pedestrian paths if necessary or perform in-house design	Consultant selected	Village Engineer	October 2023 & annually
5. Develop cost estimate, budget and include in Capital Improvement Plan	Funding is included in Budget	Village Engineer & Finance Director	December 2023 & annually
6. Create bid documents, advertise project, award project and start construction	Project is advertised, awarded and scheduled	Village Engineer	March – July 2024 & annually
7. In locations where pedestrian paths or crossings are desirable but not feasible, publicize safe, alternative “walk routes” nearby	Walk Routes identified and publicized	Village Engineer, GIS Coordinator, Asst. to the Village Administrator	December 2024 & annually

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

During the two most recent Strategic Planning processes a prevailing issue was that residents desired increased walkability/bikeability in the community. Construction of pedestrian facilities provides the most affordable and equitable transportation system any community can plan, design, build and maintain. In July 2017, the Blue Ribbon Commission released its recommendations for 30 pedestrian improvements in the community. Over the past five years the Village has used this list to install multi-use paths, bridge gaps and connect to other systems. Reviewing, updating and reprioritizing the Blue Ribbon Commission list will provide the Village a roadmap for making improvements going forward.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 2.3: Update Pedestrian Improvement Plan

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	The Village annually reviews the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) project list and updates internal action plans based on completed projects, unforeseen opportunities, and community feedback. Based on community feedback, the BRC project list was updated to include 4 additional projects sites. By 2026, 13 of the 35 BRC projects will have been completed. Mayor Hood recently requested Trustee O'Brien work with a group of citizens to review the BRC project list and progress to date. The group will then provide suggestions for additional improvements/projects.
2.	✓	Community Development staff met with Public Works to discuss pedestrian concerns and needs and select paths to be built for upcoming Fiscal Year based on the BRC list and resident feedback.
3.	✓	Staff selected Fuller Road Pedestrian Path and Grandville Avenue Sidewalk. The Fuller Road Ped project will be in conjunction with the Reconstruction project and the Grandville sidewalk will be a standalone project. Both projects will be a major connection for the adjacent subdivisions providing safer connectivity.
4.	✓	The Village selected Civiltech and GFT Engineering to perform the designs and permitting each project respectively.
5.	✓	Developed cost estimates, budgeted funds and included in the annual budget. This occurs annually in the fall in conjunction with the development of the capital plan, multi-year capital plan and annual budget.
6.	🕒	Creating bid documents, advertising the projects and awarding contracts is dependent on prior Action Steps.
7.	🕒	Identifying and publicizing alternative "walk routes" is dependent on prior Action Steps.

Strategic Priority: Well-Maintained Infrastructure

Initiative 2.4: Perform a comprehensive Standards and Mandate assessment

ACTION STEPS		MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1.	Identify and prioritize departmental standards and/or mandates	List of applicable metrics	Department Heads & Subject Matter Experts	September 2023
2.	Review Village-wide standards and/or mandates, eliminating standards that are superseded by organization mandates	Report identifying standards for consideration	Department Heads & Subject Matter Experts	October 2023
3.	Report applicable standards & mandate initiative to Village Administrator	Meeting with Administrator	Department Heads	January 2024
4.	Establish budget including need for design or implementation consultants	Budget submitted and approved	Department Heads & Finance Director	January 2024
5.	Identify specific workflows impacted and create action plan for implementing standard and/or mandate changes	Review current operation and identify areas of change	Subject Matter Experts	January 2025
6.	Communicate operations changes to impacted departments/personnel and implement action plan	Operational or policy changes for proposed standard/mandate	Department Heads	January through May 2025
7.	Formalize standard or mandate adoption	Increase in standards compliance documented	Village Administrator & Department Heads	May 2026

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

All Village Departments have guidelines, principles, ordinances, standards or mandates that govern their daily operation. Some of those standards or mandates are governed internally while others are made on a federal or state level. Staying compliant with all mandates and standards will help the Village continue to remain in compliance and prepare in advance of implementation of any new mandates or standards that require more staff time, consultants or funding.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 2.4: Perform a comprehensive Standards and Mandate assessment

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Departmental Matter Experts (SMEs) have assembled and prioritized the lists of required standards and mandates with respect to Village infrastructure.
2.	✓	Review of standards complete.
3.	✓	Reported high priority standards and mandates to the Village Administrator.
4.	✓	Establishing a budget for design and implementation was addressed during the FY25/26 budget process and will be readdressed annually thereafter.
5.	🕒	Workflows impacted by process improvements are being identified (such as new software and protocols for Microsoft updates, cybersecurity, etc. are rolled out to staff).
6.	✗	Communicating operational changes amongst departments and personnel is dependent on prior Action Steps.
7.	✗	Formalizing standard adoption is dependent on prior Action Steps.

Strategic Priority: Effective Communication

Initiative 3.1: Conduct resident satisfaction survey

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Research resident satisfaction survey options (internal or contract) and determine survey questions	Survey created	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Department Heads	November 2023
2. Send out resident satisfaction survey	Survey distributed	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Management Assistant	March 2024
3. Gather, analyze and share results	Results analyzed and report distributed	Assistant to the Village Administrator	June 2024
4. Identify service improvements based off of survey results (quantitative and qualitative data)	Improvements identified	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Department Heads	September 2024
5. Prioritize service improvements and, if necessary, allocate funding in departmental budgets	Improvements prioritized and budget impact identified	Department Heads & Finance Director	December 2024
6. Implement improvements	Organizational improvements made	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Department Heads	May 2025

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Resident satisfaction surveys enable the community to share its opinions, perceptions and suggestions about municipal services and government, and specific public issues. The results provide information and insight for setting priorities and preparing budgets based on feedback from residents. They also provide comparative data that can be viewed over a number of years to determine progress towards meeting needs as well as identifying changing perceptions and priorities.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 3.1: Conduct resident satisfaction survey

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Staff researched different research/survey firms and narrowed the search down to two leaders in the area of community surveying. The Village Board approved a contract with ETC Institute in early-2024. ETC Institute provides an equitable approach to survey sampling through targeting a sample representative of the demographics of the community. Staff worked with the ETC Institute to finalize the survey questions by reviewing other cities' survey reports, the 2023 National Direction Finder, soliciting staff and elected official input and incorporating metrics from the 2023-2026 strategic plan. The consultant and staff worked together to create a survey that would ask questions that pose value to Village operations.
2.	✓	The Village, through the ETC Institute, sent surveys in January 2025 to a random sample of residents in the Village. The survey gathered opinions and feedback from residents on characteristics, perceptions and satisfaction regarding the Village of Gurnee
3.	✓	The ETC Institute published the survey into various reports, and it was shared with department heads and the Village Board. It was later published on the Village website and shared with the public.
4.	✓	Staff identified various service improvements based on the survey results and feedback. Some improvements consisted of publishing the Keeping posted every other month, building out the residential email database and adding an additional code enforcement officer.
5.	✓	Staff will continue to review results and keep them in focus during the budget process to help improve programs, services and perceptions.

Strategic Priority: Effective Communication

Initiative 3.2: Create interdepartmental communications team structure

ACTION STEPS		MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1.	Identify departmental representatives	Assembly of team members	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Management Assistant	January 2023
2.	Develop communications workflow expectations	Communicated team expectations	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Management Assistant	January 2023
3.	Train team members	Trained team	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Management Assistant	March 2023
4.	Generate workflow	Consistent workflow	Communications Team	March 2023
5.	Hold ongoing meetings/trainings	Production and team learning	Communications Team	June 2023

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

An interdepartmental communications team will provide a greater service to the community through providing more thorough communication to residents and businesses. Using a team approach will increase communication output as well as create mechanisms to refine the quality of the communications produced by staff. Specifically by having department experts, reliable team members and a guided team atmosphere, the Village will be able to meet the community's information needs more effectively and efficiently.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 3.2: Create interdepartmental communications team structure

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Communications Team members have been identified and include Austin Pollack - Administration, Shawn Gaylor - Police, Dave Douglass - Fire, Matt Trujillo –Mayor's Office/Economic Development, Carrie Suarez – Information Systems, and Kristine Poisl – Public Works. Trustee Quin O'Brien has also been attending meetings.
2.	✓	Workflow expectations have been established around specific roles as Austin Pollack is the Public Information Officer (PIO) for the Village, Shawn Gaylor as the PIO for the Police Department, Dave Douglass as the PIO for the Fire Department, Carrie Suarez as the media specialist and Matt Trujillo for the Mayor's Office and Economic Development.
3.	✓	Communication Team members have been receiving training on an as needed basis and through discussion at team meetings. The newest member Matt Trujillo has received training on the guiding philosophy, platforms, communication processes and functions. Team meetings have served as valuable trainings through information sharing and understanding of platforms/tools, concept and guidelines in effort to further output, quality and overall collaboration.
4.	✓	Consistent workflow has yielded greater output and quality of the communications by Village staff. As a result, the team environment is allowing staff to meet the communications needs of the Village while keeping a consistent workflow.
5.	✓	Meetings/trainings are ongoing and scheduled monthly throughout the year. Team learning and communications workflow are expected to continually improve as a result. The team is currently working on selecting a new website provider for the Village.

Strategic Priority: Effective Communication

Initiative 3.3: Develop data-driven communications program

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Research historical practices, approaches and campaigns	Mapped out well-formed strategy	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Part-time Media Specialist	January 2023
2. Collect social platform data (social media, Weekly Announcements email, website, service request system data)	Initial review of communications data	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Part-time Media Specialist	February 2023
3. Review and aggregate data into reports	Reviewed data and compiled reports	Assistant to the Village Administrator	March 2023
4. Organize communications based on data	Strategic organization of information	Communications Team	June 2023
5. Execute plans and disseminate information based off data	Execution of data-driven communications program	Communications Team	September 2023

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

A data-driven communications program is important because in order to serve the communications needs of the Village, staff needs to know what information the public wants, when they want it and where they are going to get it. These are just some of the answers that we seek to accomplish by reviewing and analyzing our communications data. By providing the public with the information that it wants tailored to its activities, the Village is showing its commitment to transparency, responsiveness and building trusting relationships.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 3.3: Develop data-driven communications program

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	The Communications Team has discussed historical approaches and public information campaigns. Staff continues research on various data-driven communication programs and available software. A few strategies have been identified to date that could utilize the data that the Village currently has. Research on other options continues.
2.	✓	Staff is collecting social media data through Agorapulse. The new Village website anticipated in 2025 will utilize Google Analytics to gather website data in real time. Request data is being collected through the GovQA platform currently, which is also on a list to re-evaluate against other platforms in the future.
3.	✓	The review and aggregating of data into reports is ongoing as staff is becoming more familiar with the data and the platforms. Most of the data is aggregated into reports and dashboards contained in the various systems. The 2025 resident satisfaction survey provided even more information and data to be analyzed.
4.	✓	Organizing communications based on data collected is ongoing as staff obtains and becomes more familiar with the data and systems. Various organizational strategies have already been implemented based on data collected such as the redesigning of publications, content and expansion of points of contact.
5.	✓	Executing plans and disseminating information based on the data is ongoing as staff looks at the varying system data when formalizing monthly communication plans. This also includes accessing the various platforms and looking at the data in an effort to create and emphasize content, leverage optimal send times and ultimately be responsive to the citizenry.

Strategic Priority: Effective Communication

Initiative 3.4: Develop Constituent Service Program

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Identify system to categorize targeted, non-emergency constituent contacts	Targeted constituents and system identified	Assistant to the Administrator, Finance Director & Assistant Info Systems Director	February 2023
2. Implement system and provide training to key, frontline customer service personnel	System implemented and key personnel trained	Assistant to the Administrator & Assistant Info Systems Director	June 2023
3. Create departmental reports based on information gathered. Consolidate reports into organizational report	Reports created and combined	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Finance Director	December 2023
4. Share organizational report with key departmental personnel	Reports disseminated to key personnel	Assistant to the Village Administrator	March 2024
5. Identify customer contact trends across departments	Trends identified	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Finance Director	May 2024
6. Develop solutions to reduce the need for customer service contacts	Solutions developed	Assistant to the Administrator, Finance Director & Key Depart. Managers	July 2024
7. Implement solutions	Reduced constituent contacts	Assistant to the Administrator, Finance Director & Key Depart. Managers	September 2024

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Under the concept, “The best customer service is if the customer doesn’t need to call you, doesn’t need to talk to you. It just works”-Jeff Bezos. This program aims at significantly reducing non-emergency contacts while acknowledging that eliminating all may not be possible. The constituent service program is important because it serves the customer better by reducing frustration and providing an efficient resolution to a service need or inquiry. The most important part of communication is that it is understood and acted upon either through a data-driven communications program, a process improvement or even an explanation to the constituent.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 3.4: Develop Constituent Service Program

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Staff assessed using the current service request system and ability to categorize targeted, non-emergency constituent contacts. Limitations were discovered and it may be more beneficial to leverage a different platform. Additionally, it was discovered that the data needed to leverage this program may be stored in multiple systems where the consolidation of systems need to take place. This Action Step requires further research and staff discussion.
2.	✓	Staff decided to pursue building out a new website to provide better online functionality for the public's online experience with the Village. The website will serve as the first point of contact for the public online and then the service request types, forms, and applications will built in or linked to it. Eventually, we will look to explore a more robust service request system after the website is built out to implement a more advanced service request system on top of the website platform.
3.	⌚	Creating department reports based on information gathered is dependent on prior Action Steps.

Strategic Priority: Stable, Well-Trained Workforce

Initiative 4.1: Update and implement compensation and non-compensation plan

ACTION STEPS		MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1.	Budget for Compensation Consultant	Funding included in Approved Budget	Human Resources & Finance Directors	FY 23/24 budget process
2.	RFQ for Compensation Consultant compiled/issued	Multiple RFQ Responses Received	Human Resources Director & Asst. Human Resources Director	Post FY 23/24 budget approval
3.	Forward recommendation to the Village Board for selected Compensation Consultant engagement	Village Board approves consultant engagement	Human Resources Director & Asst. Human Resources Director	August 2023
4.	Work with consultant on data collection & analysis	Report generated with identified areas for change	Human Resources Director, Asst. Human Resources Director & Department Heads	Fall 2023
5.	Formulate & present recommendations to Village Administrator & Department Heads for feedback	Consensus / approval to move forward	Human Resources Director	Fall / Winter 2023
6.	Recommend changes presented to Village Board	Village Board approval of changes	Human Resources Director & Department Heads	January 2024
7.	Implement and communicate changes to employee stakeholders	Complete implementation of changes	Human Resources Director & Department Heads	April / May 2024

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Hiring and retaining competent and talented employees directly affects the success of any organization. Compensation and benefits are important aspects of an employee's satisfaction, performance and motivation in the workplace. As the labor market remains tight and competition for public sector employees is elevated, competitive and attractive compensation and benefit packages will remain an important factor for recruitment efforts and employee retention/job satisfaction.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 4.1: Update and implement compensation and non-compensation plan

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Funding for the assistance of a Compensation Consultant has been included with FY 23/24 budget
2.	✓	Staff reached out to several firms to determine interest in conducting a compensation and classification study for the Village.
3.	✓	In November 2023, staff contracted with GovHR USA to begin the compensation and classification study.
4.	✓	GovHR USA met with staff in December 2023 to begin the planning process. During the months of January and February, GovHR USA and Village staff began internal and external data collection and analysis including salary surveys and job analysis review.
5.	✓	GovHR USA presented the preliminary analysis to Village staff.
6.	✓	On April 22, 2024, the revised compensation plan was formally presented to the Village Board for approval.
7.	✓	Adjustments and updates were implemented with the start of Fiscal Year 24/25 for all compensation adjustments. Staff met individually with all impacted non-bargained personnel to review the study findings and adjustments related to the new compensation plan.

Strategic Priority: Stable, Well-Trained Workforce

Initiative 4.2: Increase training opportunities for operational effectiveness

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Audit/Inventory/Document current training programs	Training Program inventory compiled	Village Departments	Ongoing
2. Develop/Implement a system/program for tracking aggregate training hours by employee supporting distributed input / exports from departmental systems	Ability to track hours by employee over time	Village Departments	August 2023
3. Identify new and review existing cross-department training opportunities via an employee working group (repeat annually)	Documentation of cross department training	Village Departments	Annually in November
4. Compile training budget across all related lines items and recommend changes (going into budget process)	List of training expenses & budget changes	Village Departments	Annually during budget process
5. Implement planned / budgeted training activities (annually)	Participation in training opportunities	Village Departments	Throughout Fiscal Year
6. Quarterly summaries compiled on aggregate training hours & training expenses	Quarterly summary to management staff	Village Departments	August, November, February & May

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Improved staff training and cross training assists with succession planning and continuity of organizational knowledge / skills / abilities. Training also helps to reduce safety issues and increases operational efficiencies. Coordinating trainings across departments allows the organization to more effectively and efficiently use resources and conserve funds.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 4.2: Increase training opportunities for operational effectiveness

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.		Human Resources continues to engage employees in compliance training through the KnowBe4 Compliance training platform. Calendar year 2023 topics included: micro-aggression training; unconscious bias; and annual Sexual Harassment training. During the summer of 2024 a series on Respectful Workplace completed. Employees and supervisors are currently completing the annual Sexual Harassment training module. Other trainings are being reviewed for the remainder of 2024 and 2025.
2.		Due to departments utilizing different systems to track training specific to their needs (i.e., Police, Fire, Public Works), integration into a single tracking system will require additional staff and technological resources that have not yet been identified or budgeted. Alternative options are being reviewed to determine how to share data across all departments. New software requirements as a result of joining LakeComm 9-1-1 may offer an opportunity for a shared, training tracker program.
3.		Departments continue to work on cross-training opportunities. Creation of an employee working group to identify opportunities is currently on-hold due to limited staffing. Creation of the working group has not deterred participation in cross-departmental opportunities. For example, June 2024 featured a multi-day National Incident Management System (NIMS) training session that included representation from each Village department, as well as outside agencies.
4.		Compiling (new) training budgets and recommending changes is a part of the annual budget development process and is dependent on prior Action Steps.
5.		Implementing (new) planned training activities is dependent on prior Action Steps.
6.		Compiling summaries is dependent on prior Action Steps.

Strategic Priority: Stable, Well-Trained Workforce

Initiative 4.3: Implement professional development pathways for management positions

ACTION STEPS		MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1.	Identify targeted positions for key promotions/succession planning	Dept./Division Lists of Positions	Human Resources Director, Asst. Human Resources Director & Departments	Annually during budget process
2.	Enumerate key skills, knowledge, abilities for success in position	Job analysis from compensation study	Human Resources Director, Asst. Human Resources Director & Departments	Fall 2023
3.	Identify individuals best demonstrating key skills, knowledge, abilities and interest in advancement	Identify via performance evaluation process	Human Resources Director, Asst. Human Resources Director & Departments	Annually during budget process
4.	Provide opportunities for training & specializations to develop & demonstrate Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA's) for supervisor and management positions	Document training tied to individual	Human Resources Director, Asst. Human Resources Director & Departments	Annually and ongoing
5.	Provide feedback, advice and mentoring to individuals who take advantage of opportunities	Document during annual evaluation process	Village Departments	Annually and ongoing

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Identifying incumbent employees to move into supervisory / management roles assists with succession planning, continuity of organizational knowledge / skills / abilities and improves employee satisfaction and retention. Providing professional development opportunities ensures that knowledge and skills stay relevant and up-to-date. This ultimately results in a higher level of service provided to the community.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 4.3: Implement professional development pathways for management positions

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Identifying positions/promotions is an ongoing process throughout the budget year as vacancies or pending vacancies occur. In addition, this is reviewed during the annual budget process to prepare for the upcoming year. Since January 1 and October 28, 2024, 15 internal promotions have occurred (with three additional promotions scheduled for November 2024). These were mainly within Police and Fire.
2.	✓	New proposed promotional positions and support positions were included in the compensation study for review.
3.	✓	New recruitments and positions continue to focus on succession planning. The Police and Fire Departments continue to provide training and development opportunities to prepare staff for promotion from within the organization. The results of the compensation study have been incorporated into job postings to attract candidates with the necessary experience to be placed in succession planning for potential future promotions.
4.	✓	Management continues to offer professional development opportunities aimed at employee growth. Examples include online courses and certificates, conferences, workshops and networking events. The Police Department continues to send newly promoted Commanders to Staffing Command School and recently promoted Sergeants to Supervision of Police Personnel training classes as schedules permit. The Fire Department continues to send shift management personnel to the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association Annual Symposium. Additional credentialing through the Chief Fire Officer program through the Center for Public Safety Excellence continues to be offered for management staff. Public Works, Engineering, Planning, and Administration continue to send staff to professional conferences for training and networking in their respective job professions.
5.	✓	Individuals who attend professional development sessions return to the organization and share the knowledge they have gained. This leads to additional conversations related to goals and expectations.

Strategic Priority: Stable, Well-Trained Workforce

Initiative 4.4: Update recruiting and retention efforts with a focus on diversity to meet the needs of next generation workforce

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Research and identify best practices and innovative approaches to recruiting diverse and next generation candidates	Applicable best practices identified and discussed	Human Resources Director & Asst. Human Resources / Finance Director	May 2023 and ongoing
2. Utilize technology and procedure updates to enhance/streamline the recruitment process	Technology and procedure modifications identified	Human Resources Director & Asst. Human Resources / Finance Director	May 2023 and ongoing
3. Make recommendations on recruitment modifications to Village Administration and Civil Service Commission	Suggested modifications presented	Human Resources Director & Asst. Human Resources / Finance Director	August 2023
4. Identify opportunities to interact with next generation candidates and other persons interested in public sector careers	Participation in community outreach opportunities	Human Resources Director in conjunction with Department Heads	September 2023
5. Identify and address barriers that could lead to lower retention	Reduced turnover	Human Resources Director in conjunction with Department Heads	September 2023
6. Create a strategic onboarding and assimilation program	Increased retention & dedication in new hires	HR Director & Asst. HR / Finance Director in conjunction with Department Heads	January 2024

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

With 61 million people from Gen Z entering the workforce, recruiting this demographic requires employers to reexamine tactics relied on for decades. A diverse and multi-generational workforce will bring a consistent influx of ideas for new programs, services and improved processes while being representative of the community it serves. By applying available technology throughout the recruitment and hiring process, vacancies will be filled sooner which will help improve department operations and reduce ongoing overtime. Improved retention strategies will help reduce turnover and meet the needs of diverse and next generation workers.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 4.4: Update recruiting and retention efforts with a focus on diversity to meet the needs of next generation workforce

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	With primary focus on Police and Fire Departments due to ongoing staffing needs, additional efforts are being made to connect with diverse candidates early-on in the recruitment process. Outreach efforts include job fairs, career fairs, year-round community outreach through a variety of different events and social media postings. In other departments utilizing broader recruitment sources such as Indeed Candidate Match and Linked-in outreach has resulted in increased diversity in the candidate pool.
2.	✓	Staff continues to review ways to improve recruitment to reach targeted audiences. Zoom interviews remain an available tool for candidates from outside the local area. Staff has been adjusting job advertisements to highlight benefits, work life balance and other attributes that distinguish Gurnee from other public sector employers.
3.	✓	Staff continues to work with the Civil Service Commission during recruitment processes to remain efficient and make process changes as necessary.
4.	✓	Individual departments continue to attend high school career fairs, engage with the public at different events and seek out other opportunities to connect with the next generation candidates and others interested in public sector careers.
5.	✓	Turnover remains generally low, with the majority of turnover the result of retirements. In cases where employees voluntarily leave, departments may conduct exit interviews to determine areas for improvement or to identify workplace barriers to success.
6.	✓	Creation of a strategic onboarding and assimilation program has not been introduced across all Departments, however, the Police and Fire Departments do have programs in place. The Police Department continues with the mentor program. In addition, when new Police Officers attend the Police Academy, designated staff members keep in contact with the recruits throughout the training process to address any issues or concerns. The Fire Department recently sent its first employee to the Fire Academy and has also instituted a staff member / recruit connection while the employee attends the academy. These efforts keep the new recruits connected back to the workplace and engaged in the department and the profession.

Strategic Priority: Safe Community

Initiative 5.1: Create a Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Plan

ACTION STEPS		MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1.	Determine recruitment team	Recruitment team established	Police Chief, Fire Chief, Human Resources & Asst. Human Resources Director	April 2023
2.	Research recruitment best practices	Data collected and compiled	Recruitment Team	June 2023
3.	Research retention best practices	Data collected and compiled	Recruitment Team	June 2023
4.	Determine budgetary needs for recruitment efforts	Budget prepared	Recruitment Team	September 2023
5.	Identify recruitment opportunities	Data collected and compiled	Recruitment Team	December 2023
6.	Implement researched recruitment best practices	Recruitment practices implemented	Recruitment Team	March 2024
7.	Implement researched retention best practices	Recruitment practices implemented	Recruitment Team	May 2024

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Police and Fire Departments are service organizations. The quality of their respective service delivery is directly linked to the quality of personnel they recruit, hire and retain. Failing to recruit and retain personnel that have a vested interest in the organization and share in its mission, vision and values will have a direct impact on the organization's ability to serve the community.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 5.1: Create a Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Plan

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Commander Kalinowski, Detective Gaylor and Officer Silvernail have been selected to participate on the Police Department recruitment team. Deputy Chief Douglass, Battalion Chief Steffens and Lieutenant Perry have been selected to participate on the Fire Department recruitment team.
2.	✓	Commander Kalinowski has completed his staff study from Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command. His findings include best practices for recruitment and retention and have been shared with the Recruitment Team.
3.	✓	The Recruitment Team is actively researching best practices for retention.
4.	✓	The Police and Fire Departments continue to identify additional fund needs based on data gathered for recruitment and retention best practices. Police and Fire will include updates in budget prep for FY 26/27.
5.	✓	The Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments have identified recruitment opportunities by attending job fairs and engaging with high school students from Warren and Waukegan High Schools, as well as the Tech Campus, about career paths in public safety. Recruitment also includes collaborations with the College of Lake County, Gurnee Mills and Lake County Paramedic programs.
6.	✓	The Police Department has redesigned its recruitment website and assigned a Recruitment Liaison to maintain communication throughout the process. The Fire Department has enhanced its recruitment effort on the Village website and social media, as well as through on-site visits to local hospitals and volunteer/part-time fire departments. Recruitment letters and phone calls to prospective candidates were also conducted. The Public Works Department has changed to a tailored approach to entry level maintenance worker recruitments. Instead of posting for an entry level maintenance worker with all Street Division and Utility Division skills, staff has modified each posting to tailor it to the vacancy available. This was done with the intention to retain staff in the field that motivates and inspires them most.
7.	✓	The Police Department has established a Wellness Coordinator position and introduced a department comfort dog, along with a dedicated wellness room for employees to de-stress and recover from difficult situations. The Department also provides access to mental health support services, massage therapy, chiropractic care, and physical therapy to help employees manage and reduce stress. Additional initiatives include family engagement opportunities and educational presentations designed to involve family members in the profession and strengthen overall support systems. The Fire Department recently completed renovations of Station 1's sleeping quarters creating separate, private rooms for employees, bringing it in line with Station 3. The Department is working this budget year to develop plans for Station 2's sleeping quarters to be brought up to the same standard. These efforts help ensure personnel are better able to manage stress to reduce likelihood of burnout and job separation.

Strategic Priority: Safe Community

Initiative 5.2: Develop a public safety community engagement program

ACTION STEPS		MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1.	Determine and rate which public safety community engagement programs are needed	Data collected and compiled	Police Chief & Fire Chief in conjunction with Department Heads	May 2023
2.	Determine budget needs	Data collected and compiled	Police Chief, Fire Chief & Finance Director	January 2024
3.	Implement existing programs	Existing programs implemented	Police Chief, Fire Chief, Police Department PIO, Fire Pub. Ed. Coordinator	July 2024
4.	Create and implement new programs	New programs created and implemented	Police Department PIO, Assistant to the Administrator, Fire Pub. Ed. Coordinator	May 2025

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

One of the most critical components of effective law enforcement is the establishment and maintenance of public trust. Non-enforcement community engagement activities can make a significant contribution to building and maintaining lasting relationships and community support.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 5.2: Develop a public safety community engagement program

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.		Internal discussions are continuing related to what public safety community engagement programs are needed. Current community engagement campaigns remain active and include the Fire and Police Expo (May 2024 and scheduled again for May 2025); Cops and Bobbers (July 2024 and 2025); Big and Small Bike Helmets for All, an ice cream incentive program; Gurnee Days Open Houses; Valentines for Seniors (February 2024 and 2025); Safety Stars and Dilly Bars; Bike Rodeo (September 2025); Junior Officer for a Day (February 2025); Coffee with a Cop (October 2025); the Youth Citizens Police Academy (June 2024 and July 2025); the Citizens Police Academy (September 2024, March 2025, and October 2025); and ongoing monthly block parties. Joint Training in the Park which includes Police, Fire and Public Works occurred in September 2025.
2.		Determining budget needs for public safety community engagement programs is ongoing and dependent on the prior Action Step.
3.		Currently the Police and the Fire Departments are conducting public safety community engagement programs. Advanced relationships with Warren High School, Lake County Technology Campus and the College of Lake County are also in place and continually assessed for opportunities to enhance offerings. Active Threat Presentations and Training occur throughout the year.
4.		The process of creating and implementing new programs has started and is ongoing. Recent examples include IL Targeted Violence Prevention and Intervention (Feb 2023), Protect Lake County (Jan 2025) and Junior Fire Academy (June 2025).

Strategic Priority: Safe Community

Initiative 5.3: Create stakeholder relationship strategy

ACTION STEPS		MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1.	Develop and conduct a baseline community safety survey	Data collected and compiled	Police Chief, Fire Chief & Assistant to the Village Administrator	May 2024
2.	Determine internal and external stakeholders	Data collected and compiled	Police Chief & Fire Chief in conjunction with Department Heads	Aug 2024
3.	Develop new stakeholder relationships	New relationships created	Police Chief & Fire Chief in conjunction with Department Heads	January 2025
4.	Strengthen existing stakeholder relationships	Existing relationships strengthened	Police Chief & Fire Chief in conjunction with Department Heads	January 2025
5.	Connect with leaders at partner organizations	Partner organization relationships formed	Police Chief & Fire Chief in conjunction with Department Heads	July 2025
6.	Engage in face to face conversation	Conversations completed	Police Chief & Fire Chief	October 2025
7.	Conduct follow-up community safety survey and compare data	Data collected and compiled	Police Chief, Fire Chief & Assistant to the Village Administrator	May 2026

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Community relations is a function that evaluates public attitudes, shapes policies of the organization in the public interest and produces programs of action to earn and maintain community understanding and respect. Public safety relies on community members' willingness to trust services and believe the services reflect community values. Strong relationships of mutual trust between public safety and the community they serve are critical to maintaining public safety.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 5.3: Create stakeholder relationship strategy

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.		The January 2025 resident satisfaction survey will produce some baseline public safety satisfaction data. Based on the information received from the resident satisfaction survey, staff will evaluate the need for additional public safety surveys as well as potential topics whereby additional feedback is needed.
2.		In order to fully determine internal and external stakeholders, survey data from the prior Action Step is needed.
3.		Developing new stakeholder relationship is dependent on prior Action Steps.
4.		Working to strengthen existing stakeholder relationships is an ongoing process. Regular status meetings with the “Big 3” continue. In addition, the Police Department has numerous outreach programs where it visits a specific sector of the community on a regular basis.
5.		While formal meeting schedules have not been set, there is regular communication between partner taxing bodies. In addition, the Mayor and Village Administrator meet quarterly with their counterparts at other agencies to discuss issues of concerns and how current relationships can be used to further improve the level of services provided to residents and businesses.
6.		Formal meetings for face-to-face sessions have not been set, however there is regular communication between Village public safety leadership and counterparts in partner agencies.
7.		Conducting a follow-up community safety survey is dependent on prior Action Steps.

Strategic Priority: Safe Community

Initiative 5.4: Update Comprehensive Major Incident Training Plan

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Determine updates needed to comprehensive major incident training plan	Data collected and compiled	Fire Chief, Police Chief & Public Works Director	January 2024
2. Identify target hazards within the Village of Gurnee and Fire Protection District	Data collected and compiled	Fire Chief, Police Chief & Public Works Director	January 2024
3. Determine National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance within the Village of Gurnee	Data collected and compiled	Fire Lieutenant	January 2024
4. Participate in interdepartmental trainings	Trainings completed	Fire Department Training Officer & Fire Lieutenant	May 2024
5. Deploy Village-wide NIMS training	Trainings completed	Fire Lieutenant	May 2024
6. Participate in multi-agency trainings	Trainings completed	Fire Department Training Officer & Fire Lieutenant	May 2025

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Major incidents are serious events with broad-reaching consequences that require the coordination and response of multiple personnel, departments, agencies, etc. In addition to effective command, control and oversight they call for a team-based approach and efficient communication at all levels. Ensuring that all Village staff have baseline training related to major incident response will result in a more efficient and effective response. The minimal level of training required is commensurate with the individual's role in the organization.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 5.4: Update Comprehensive Major Incident Training Plan

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Secured NIMS representatives from Dispatch, Police, Fire, Public Work and Village Hall to help determine updates needed to training plans.
2.	✓	Target hazards (hotels/motels, assisted living facilities, schools, hazmat sites, etc.) that would strain Fire Department response capabilities within Gurnee and the Warren-Waukegan Fire Protection District have been identified. Pre-arrival emergency action plans have been created and updated accordingly.
3.	✓	A comprehensive review of NIMS training for Village staff and new supervisors was conducted to identify their required training needs.
4.	✓	In addition to Fire and Police participating in joint agency training at Waukegan Police Department in April 2023, Fire and Public Works collaborated in October 2024 to simulate a trench rescue scenario aimed at identifying capabilities and strengthening operational effectiveness.
5.	✓	Required NIMS courses were assigned to Village staff who needed them to ensure compliance with the standards established by the State of Illinois. The online courses IS-100, IS-200, IS-400, and IS-800 were provided, while in-person classes for IS-300 and IS-400 took place at the Gurnee Police Department in June 2024. Representatives from Police, Fire, Public Works, Administration and Community Development attended the IS-300 and 400 courses.
6.	✓	Dispatch and Fire Department attended 8-hour multi-agency training at IL MABAS headquarters on June 15, 2023. The exercise was attended by several IL and WI police, fire, dispatch and military representative. The table top scenario demonstrated communications interoperability between IL and WI and identified potential challenges in response. Fire, Police, Six Flags and neighboring fire departments participated in an active shooter drill at Six Flags (April 2025). Future multi-agency opportunities continue to be researched.

Strategic Priority: Lifestyle Vitality

Initiative 6.1: Develop Village/small business partnership program

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Streamline special event permitting and licensing requirements	Requirements reviewed and modifications made	Community Development & Economic Development Heads	January 2023
2. Develop and distribute special event guidelines for small businesses to utilize	Document developed and shared via multiple outlets	Economic Development Director & Management Assistant	February 2023
3. Recruit partners/multi-tenant centers to host new events	Multi-tenant & business centers contacted	Economic Development Director & Management Assistant	March 2023
4. Engage the Chamber of Commerce in promotion and events that support "connectedness" between businesses and the community	Planning session with Chamber leaders held	Economic Development Director & Management Assistant	March 2023
5. Allocate annual funding/resources to support events	Sufficient funds to support events included in budget	Economic Development & Finance Directors	May 2023
6. Promote Small Business events through Village channels (social media, email, website)	Events are promoted via multiple outlets	Economic Development Director, Assistant to the Village Administrator	Ongoing
7. Partner with Gurnee Mills and Alpha Media regarding programming at the Show Court	Events are held at the Gurnee Mills Show Court	Economic Development Director & Management Assistant	October 2023

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

In contrast to the regional draw of Gurnee's large tourism and retail sector, small businesses depend upon the loyalty of a local consumer base. Owners (typically local) and their employees support the community through schools, neighborhoods, and civic and religious institutions. Gurnee residents appreciate a variety of locally sourced goods and services. Two-way engagement with the community is what establishes roots and keeps independent businesses growing in Gurnee.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 6.1: Develop Village/small business partnership program

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Temporary Outdoor Dining guidelines, implemented during COVID-19 to streamline the establishment of outdoor dining areas, were modified for permanence and adopted/codified.
2.	✓	Guidelines have been emailed to the business community and will be re-sent annually; initiative should continue to increase engagement among new businesses and serve as a reminder for established businesses.
3.	✓	Gurnee Farmers Market continues at Saratoga Square; Village support includes a \$3,000 sponsorship and use of Village generator/cones/bar barricades. Multi-tenant center owners have been contacted with offers of Village support (operational, financial, marketing) for their events and a willingness to help develop new ones; this outreach will be expanded to include smaller centers and repeated annually for all.
4.	✓	Event partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce include the Gurnee Days Parade & Bingo; Bonfire & Brews (spring/fall); Holiday Lights at Welton Plaza; the CPKC Holiday Train; and the annual Business Luncheon. The Chamber launched a new, semi-annual streetlight banner sponsorship program (Gurnee Days + holiday/winter) with operational support provided by the Village's Public Works Department.
5.	✓	Funds are budgeted to support Gurnee Days, Families on the Fairway, Sounds of Summer, Farmers Market, Training in the Park, First Responder Expo, block parties, Holiday Lights, Holiday Train, Bonfires and Brews, Halloween/Fall Festival, and more. Staff resources, including the Village's Community Engagement Coordinator, have been allocated accordingly.
6.	✓	Small business promotional materials are shared through Village digital & print media and Gurnee's Got It social media. Tom's Tours videos are created for each visit. Chamber Executive Director Lynn Granstrom administers Gurnee's Got It, providing continuity and crossover. Grand Openings/Ribbon Cuttings are shared via social media and Weekly Announcements. Projects in Progress tracks larger projects monthly. Keeping Posted (quarterly) lists businesses 'new' and 'coming soon'.
7.	✓	Gurnee Mills has greatly expanded its Calendar of Events. Alpha Media, recently acquired by (as of September 2025) Connoisseur Media has utilized the show court actively. For a flat fee to cover time & talent, the radio stations have conducted remote, live broadcasts at community events; the Village has engaged them to cover Gurnee Days, Bonfire & Brews: Taste of Gurnee, Fall Festival and Holiday Lights.

Strategic Priority: Lifestyle Vitality

Initiative 6.2: Establish and support events in partnership with community and neighborhood organizations

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Streamline and enhance the block-party permit application/process	Process reviewed and changes implemented	Management Assistant & Public Works Director	February 2023
2. Update list of Homeowner Associations (HOA) contacts and promote streamlined process	List is updated	Management Assistant, Senior Planner & Village Engineer	March 2023 and annually thereafter
3. Establish a “Connected Community” Plan	Plan is completed and posted to website	Management Assistant & Senior Planner	February 2024
4. Share Plan with Park District, Chamber and other community partners	Plan shared with community partners	Management Assistant	March 2024
5. Identify neighborhood champions for subdivisions without HOA's	Outreach is conducted to neighborhoods without HOAs	Management Assistant	March 2024
6. Establish an annual HOA/neighborhood champion event to promote relationship building and communication	Event is scheduled each year	Management Assistant	April 2024
7. Identify dedicated resources/funds for community/neighborhood events (lend support to efforts)	Annual budget includes funds to support events	Finance Director & Management Assistant	May 2024

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Community and neighborhood events allow people from all walks of life to connect and form relationships, not only with each other, but also with the event sponsors. They help create a sense of belonging and a vested interest in the overall well-being of the community. Events can also serve as an opportunity to disseminate information, educate participants and solicit feedback. Local events can strengthen bonds, increase public safety/trust, improve mental health and expand social networks among other benefits.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 6.2: Establish and support events in partnership with community and neighborhood organizations

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Block party permit applications may be submitted online. The “Neighbor Up Block Party Grant” established last year (\$500 toward food, entertainment) with the requirement that the event must be free and open to the entire neighborhood has proved very popular. In 2024, there were 21 block party grants awarded, and that number has since increased to 35 block party grants in 2025. This compares to 11 block party permits in 2023.
2.	✓	The list of homeowners associations maintained by the Village has been updated and will be revised annually. This is shared across departments.
3.	🕒	Work on a “Connected Community” Plan is underway, new events such as the Gurnee Get-Togethers and the “Neighbor Up” Block Party program, Gurnee Arts Commission, and Gurnee Cares Commission have been started by the Village’s Community Engagement Coordinator.
4.	✗	Sharing the “Connected Community” plan is dependent on Action Step #3.
5.	🕒	The list of contacts for homeowners associations has been updated. Outreach to areas without HOA’s began Spring 2024 whilst promoting the new Block Party Grant program and HOA’s were invited to the State of the Village Open House/presentation; this outreach will continue in a more formalized fashion with the goal of promoting relationship building and communication. Staff has continued to communicate with HOA’s on related news and the block party grant program.
6.	🕒	Staff continues to discuss opportunities related to an annual homeowners associations/neighborhood champion event. Planning for such an event is in the early stages. A Gurnee Get-Together event has taken place at both Christine Thompson Park and Bittersweet Golf Course in 2025 to unify the neighborhoods with live music, food, and games.
7.	✓	Funds are budgeted to support Gurnee Days, Families on the Fairway, Sounds of Summer, Farmers Market, Training in the Park, First Responder Expo, block parties, Holiday Lights, Holiday Train, Bonfires and Brews, Halloween/Fall Festival, and more. Staff resources have been allocated accordingly.

Strategic Priority: Lifestyle Vitality

Initiative 6.3: Develop relationship with regional multi-cultural agencies

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Identify potential partner agencies in the Gurnee and Lake County area	Potential partners identified	Economic Development Director & Management Assistant	January 2023
2. Establish cross-departmental group of representatives to engage in initial outreach with Mayor	Cross-dept. group established & meeting held	Management Assistant	May 2023
3. Schedule follow-up conversations with subset of the group	Invitation extended for open, ongoing communication	Management Assistant	July 2023 & semi-annually thereafter
4. Actively communicate appointed and employment vacancies to partner agencies	Vacancies shared with key contacts	Mayor & Human Resources Director	July 2023
5. Invite participation of Warren Township High School (WTHS) cultural diversity organization members to the Youth Leadership Initiative	Increased diversity on Youth Leadership Initiative	Mayor & Assistant to the Village Administrator	September 2023
6. Increase Village presence/participation at WTHS cultural events	Village participation in events increases	Assistant to the Village Administrator	September 2024
7. Include an "Opportunity for All" article in newsletter and invite input via online survey	Article and survey published	Assistant to the Village Administrator	May 2025

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Collaborating with regional multi-cultural agencies will allow the Village to more effectively serve all members of the community and improve the level of service provided. It is an opportunity to utilize untapped resources and population specific experts. By collaborating with these agencies, the Village can be more attentive to needs and effectively invest in sustaining a welcoming community for all.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 6.3: Develop relationship with regional multi-cultural agencies

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	Staff has identified potential partner agencies in Lake County including but not limited to: Mano a Mano Family Resource Center; Latino Community Association; African American Community Partnership Group Lake County; the College of Lake County Multicultural Student Center; and Lake County Workforce Development.
2.	🕒	A cross-departmental group has been established and is meeting regularly, approximately bi-monthly. Representatives include: Asst. Finance/HR Director Erica Wells and Community Engagement Coordinator Matt Trujillo, Administration; Heather Galan, Public Works; Deputy Chief David Douglass, Fire; Detective Stan St. Clair, Police; and Daniel Salgado, Community Development. Staff have begun selectively participating in events sponsored by partner agencies.
3.	🕒	A subset of the Village team will engage, with the Mayor, in outreach to partner agencies by February 2025, with a plan to reconnect semi-annually thereafter. Staff has met with partner agencies such as Mano a Mano, Lake County Tech Campus, Lake County Workforce to discuss opportunities to increase diversity in the Village's workforce. Additionally the Village has been attending the newly formed Diversity Roundtables hosted by the Warren Newport Public Library.
4.	🕒	Job vacancies are currently shared with Lake County Workforce Development and the Gurnee Chamber of Commerce as appropriate. Partner agencies that wish to be kept apprised will be added to this list for notification. Ethnic or racial diversity among the full time Village workforce has been steadily increasing since 2018 and now stands at 26% as of September 2025.
5.	🕒	The Mayor's Gurnee Youth Leadership Initiative, with a focus on youth empowerment and community service, is currently led by a diverse group of students. These young leaders through their ties to WTHS interact with the various student organizations that represent Gurnee's cultural diversity, thus nurturing future leadership.
6.	🕒	Staff and elected officials have participated and attended selected events at WTHS, Gurnee District 56 and Woodland District 50. Staff have reached out to diversity and cultural organizations at WTHS to offer opportunities to come talk to students about potential career paths within the Village. Formalization of this effort has yet to occur.
7.	✗	As progress is made on Action Steps #1-#6, an article will be drafted for inclusion in a future edition of the Keeping Posted newsletter.

Strategic Priority: Lifestyle Vitality

Initiative 6.4: Create opportunities for community engagement around strategic priorities

ACTION STEPS	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TARGET DATE
1. Host annual State of the Village open house to review Strategic Plan progress and to allow residents to interact with key management personnel	State of the Village Open House event is planned/held	Assistant to the Village Administrator & Department Heads	April 2023
2. Add QR Code to the Keeping Posted newsletter inviting citizens to provide feedback on a timely issue	Newsletters with QR codes are published	Assistant to the Village Administrator in conjunction with Department Heads	June 2023 & semi-annually thereafter
3. Prepare and distribute an abbreviated, executive summary of key Village planning documents (financial, infrastructure, etc.)	Summary is published and shared with community	Finance Director & Assistant to the Village Administrator	July 2023 & annually thereafter
4. Expand the number of opportunities for residents and businesses to interact with elected officials outside of Village Hall; meet citizens where they are	Interaction opportunities are provided	Mayor & Management Assistant	September 2023

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Participants of the 2022 Strategic Plan update initiative felt the Village did a very good job at communicating information, but opportunities to receive feedback, engage in two-way conversation and keep the community informed of progress could be improved. Community engagement enables decision-makers to listen and, in turn, demonstrate the impact of community contribution. Community engagement builds deeper, stronger and more trusting relationships between Village government and its community members.

Status as of: October 2025

Initiative 6.4: Create opportunities for community engagement around strategic priorities

ACTION STEPS	STATUS	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRESS TO DATE
1.	✓	The State of the Village was hosted at Village Hall on Monday, January 27, 2025. The event, well attended by HOA/neighborhood representatives as well as partner agencies and members of the public, included an Open House followed by Mayor Hood's formal address. Additionally, every resident was mailed a newsletter summarizing the information covered during the Mayor's presentation.
2.	✓	Staff reviewed the use of QR codes in Village newsletters and found that they take up considerable space for routine communication pieces. However, they are optimally used when the Village launches specific campaigns where the public needs to go somewhere to do something. An example of this recently was when the new mass notification system was launched and the public needed to go sign up online.
3.	✓	New communication pieces such as the State of the Village (2025), Emergency Alert System Launch/Sign Up (2025), Year in Review (Spring 2023 & 2024), Popular Annual Financial Report (Summer 2023), Construction Schedule (Summer 2023 & 2024, 2025), Recycling Guidelines (Fall 2023 & 2024), Veterans Services Guide (Fall 2023 & 2024), Senior Services Guide (Winter 2023), Recycling & Safe Disposal Guide (Spring 2024 & Spring 2025) have been included in Keeping Posted newsletter. Further communications pieces are being developed and the Keeping Posted is now be sent out every other month due to the information obtained through the survey.
4.	✓	With the increased frequency and variety of events, the opportunities for the public to interact informally with elected officials has also increased. Coffee/Ice Cream/Hot Dog/Storytime/Summer Camp with the Mayor now occurs approximately monthly. The frequency of Tom's Tours visiting local businesses and organizations has increased to 2x a month. Training In the Park brings Village operating departments into various neighborhoods. Village and Chamber are routinely collaborating on ribbon cuttings and Grand Openings (12-15/year). The Gurnee Get Togethers were a new addition for 2024 that have been replicated throughout the community in 2025. Safety Stars & Dilly Bars, Cops & Bobbers, and an enhanced First Responders Expo provide fun, educational environments in which families can interact with public safety and elected officials.