

Summary Report: Strategic Planning Workshop

Presented to:
Village of La Grange, Illinois



Certified Public Accountants and Advisors
998 Corporate Blvd · Aurora IL 60502 · 630.566.8400 · 630.566.8401 (fax)

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1415 W. Diehl Road, Suite 400 • Naperville, IL 60563

Certified Public Accountants & Advisors

*Members of American Institute of
Certified Public Accountants*

January 10, 2012

Mr. Robert Pilipiszyn
Village Manager
Village of La Grange
53 South La Grange Road
La Grange, IL 60525

Dear Bob:

During the past several months, it has been our pleasure to work with the Village of La Grange Board of Trustees and senior staff—assisting to review and update the Village’s Strategic Plan and supporting action plans. Though strategic planning has been a foundational element at the Village for some time, it is commendable that leaders have not merely rested on past success; importantly, your organization continues to invest in and revise the goals that guide key decision-making.

This engagement called for a review of La Grange’s existing plans, a facilitated board and staff workshop, and a new strategic plan document. Our aim was to create an inclusive process that honored the work of the past, but also better prepared the Village to confront future opportunities and challenges. To accomplish this, there was due consideration of the Village’s “Pillars,” detailed pre-planning with staff, and a goal-focused workshop to engage leaders.

The following report presents an overview of our process, summaries of the significant Strategic Planning Workshop activities, and finally, the outcomes that comprise the Village’s 2011 Strategic Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to assist the Village of La Grange in determining its goals and embarking on its future priorities. We appreciate the willing participation of both the Village Board and department directors who devoted their time, knowledge, and expertise that truly helped make this project successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. T. Kuhn'.

Gregory T. Kuhn, Ph.D.
Director, Government Management Consulting

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Megan E. Pierce'.

Megan E. Pierce
Senior Management Consultant



INTRODUCTION

Sikich LLP was hired by the Village of La Grange in October, 2011 to assist in updating the Village's future goals and priorities, and to draft a new strategic plan for 2011. The Village, already operating from the visions outlined in their 2009 plan, with support from a detailed operations plan document, sought primarily to review, revise, and refine existing goals and ensure key leaders had consensus about ongoing priorities. Given the Village's significant experience in strategic planning and the current documents, this process called for a unique approach.

The strategic planning process, rather than starting with traditional elements such as mission or vision statements, was designed to build on the work the Village completed in 2007 and 2009. During initial meetings with La Grange's management, it was determined a workshop of elected officials and department directors would best meet the Village's objective of a new, updated plan document. Working closely with leaders to design the approach, Sikich held a preparatory meeting with department directors on October 19, 2011. The Strategic Planning Workshop was subsequently scheduled for November 4 (evening) and November 5 (day), 2011.

Over the two days of the Strategic Planning Workshop, participants worked in a participative and collaborative environment. Elected officials and staff shared ideas, visions, current challenges, and potential innovations. The subsequent report follows the workshop agenda and offers brief summaries of the major activities—ultimately presenting the outcomes that now constitute the Village's 2011 Strategic Plan. The resulting plan goals will be used by Village management and the individual departments to revise the action plans used to guide budgeting, operations, and policy-making.



STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

The Strategic Planning Workshop commenced Friday afternoon, November 4, 2011. Participants included:

- Elizabeth Asperger, Village President
- Bill Holder, Trustee
- Michael Horvath, Trustee
- Mark Kuchler, Trustee
- Mark Langan, Trustee
- Jeff Nowak, Trustee
- Jim Palermo, Trustee
- Mark Burkland, Village Attorney
- Robert Pilipiszyn, Village Manager
- Andrianna Peteron, Asst. Village Manager
- Patrick Benjamin, Dir. Community Development
- Lou Cipparrone, Finance Director
- Bill Bryzgalski, Fire Chief
- Michael Holub, Police Chief

In addition to the Sikich facilitators, Village Administrative Secretary Ellie Elder assisted in the recording and documentation of workshop outcomes. The outcomes described in this report are mainly derived from these notes and the facilitators' flip charts.

The workshop kick-off involved a brief overview of the Village's current operating environment, as well as the importance of strategic planning—reviewing past processes and the desired outcomes of this endeavor. To get in the mindset of planning, participants summarized what they believed to be the most significant changes in the last 24 months:

- Closing of Borders
- Partnership with La Grange Theatre
- Stretching Village finances
- "Lifeboat" and Cost Containment Plan
- Downtown revitalization
- Increase identity and presence
- Place for entertainment
- Storms and flooding
- Finality of YMCA project
- Increase in school enrollment
- End of TIF District
- Union concession/bargaining
- Employee communications
- Cohesive group- continuity and stability

Strategic Plan Pillars

The "Pillars" were created during La Grange's 2007 strategic planning process. They were originally drafted to facilitate understanding of the Village's public policy framework, but have carried forward as a sound representation of the broad goals the Village seeks. To begin, Sikich presented the existing pillars for consideration:

- Preserve and enhance the quality of life in La Grange
- Economic development
- Community development including Public Safety and Core Services
- Maintain aging infrastructure/capital projects
- Maintain the Village's strong financial position
- Structure, support and development of staff resources to deliver core services

As a large group, elected officials and staff discussed the meaning of the goals and their appropriateness in context of the significant changes since the last strategic plan. All agreed that the "Pillar" framework



was still a good fit for future goal setting, but some felt new language was needed to better capture the goals' purpose. Participants emphasized the "Pillars" should represent the Village's core values and good governance. They looked for the phrases they felt showed a balanced framework, with a focus on what was "core" to protect, as well as strategic to keeping operations on track. A revised set of "Pillars" was agreed-to by the group and were used as guides for the later, more focused goal-setting activities:

- Preserve and enhance the quality of life we enjoy in La Grange
- Maintenance and capital planning for our aging infrastructure
- Delivery of core services
- Community vitality
- Maintain the Village's strong financial position
- Structure, support and develop staff resources to deliver core services

A visual representation of the "Pillars" also appears in the **Appendices** section of this report.

Mind Mapping

A Mind Map is a facilitation tool used to engage groups in planning and brainstorming exercises. All participants were asked to describe themes and trends related to a central idea, which in this case was "the future of the Village of La Grange." The group discussed a number of major influences they foresee affecting the Village in the next ten years, such as: privatization, development, staffing, politics, social services, population, and the economy.

The full visual presentation of the Mind Map is shown in the **Appendices** section of this report.

Departmental Presentations

Village Manager Robert Pilipiszyn opened the last segment of the evening concerning trending issues with a report on organizational productivity, health and direction, and how the sum total of all three relate to the future. The strength and cohesiveness of the management team was identified as a key variable as to the organization's ability to be effective, followed by recognition of a dedicated loyal and hard-working workforce. The need to maintain the trust and confidence of employees was emphasized. La Grange has a strong organizational, financial, and operational foundation from which to build, in contrast to some other communities, because of good planning and self-discipline. As a result, people look to La Grange as a leader in many areas from successful operations to respected and progressive governance. In order to continue to function in this forward-minded capacity, it was suggested that the scope and depth of the current workload needs to be reduced to provide opportunities for the management team to re-energize and to learn.

Following the Village Manager's introduction, department heads individually reported on the broad categories of trending with their respective areas of responsibility. Summaries of their key points, in order of presentation, appear below:

Community Development Director, Patrick Benjamin

1. Economic Development – The future of retail is uncertain which will impact how people are attracted to shopping destinations like La Grange. A market analysis would help the Village



with setting expectations and provide guidance and appropriate direction for business development in the future.

2. Drainage – While drainage from residential properties is a current operational challenge, long term trends involving climate changes may further compound this issue.
3. Demographics – Changing demographics will impact housing and business opportunities in La Grange. The population is aging. Older Americans are more rooted, while younger Americans elect for rental properties.

Public Works Director, Ryan Gillingham

1. Environment – Increased professional and governmental awareness of sustainability and green practices.
2. Technology – Increased use to support operations through mapping, tracking and documenting.
3. Infrastructure – The engineering profession is increasingly calling attention to the nation's aging infrastructure.
4. Sewer Capacity – Recent trend of high-intensity storms resulting in flooding was noted. Completion of the TARP system is expected to occur within the next 20 years – including Phase I of the McCook reservoir which is scheduled to come on-line in 2017.
5. State and Federal Funding – Tax policy changes should be anticipated at the federal and state levels in the form of reduced funding for infrastructure improvements, while at the same time, the demand for funding infrastructure replacement has increased. Current federal budget debate and increased fuel economy were cited as examples as to why funding has decreased.
6. Facilities – Public Works garage is nearing the end of its useful life. A master facilities study has been budgeted to begin the planning process for replacement.

Fire Chief, Bill Bryzgalski

1. Evaluating the functional consolidation of services continues. Planning efforts are underway involving a combined dispatch center. Area Chiefs are also looking at joint purchasing.
2. In terms of fire prevention, it was noted that a new mandate from the Office of the State Fire Marshall is anticipated which would require sprinkler systems to be installed in all new single family homes constructed beginning in 2012. This will increase the cost of construction during fragile economic times.
3. Approximately 50% of the department has been on the job six years or less. Therefore, the department will continue to place a strong emphasis on training, officer development, and succession planning.



4. Efforts to effectively plan and execute emergency management responses should continue to be supported on a local and regional basis. Disasters such as 2011 tornadoes in Joplin, Missouri would overwhelm local resources. Private sector partnerships and volunteerism could serve to augment limited local resources.
5. State and federal regulatory agencies are increasingly requiring the use of technology to document and report; move towards paperless system.
6. Labor and management continue to work on staffing strategies that would be operationally effective.

Police Chief, Mike Holub

SHORT TERM

1. The department will continue to evaluate opportunities for functional consolidation of services and cost containment efficiencies. Representative examples included the creation of a combined dispatch center; shared services with adjoining jurisdictions; and uniform report writing and recording among adjoining jurisdictions.
2. The department will also evaluate facility space utilization and configuration to coincide with future operational needs.

INTERMEDIATE TERM

1. Training to respond to threats and acts of terrorism. General training mandates were also recognized.
2. Next Generation 911
3. The need to recruit and retain qualified individuals. Emphasis on morale and motivation.

LONG TERM

1. Current local policing model not sustainable over the long term. Should anticipate migration to a regional / metropolitan policing model. Interim steps include area-wide K-9 and investigation units. Public – private partnerships / privatization is also emerging due to fiscal stress.

Finance Director Lou Cipparrone

1. Outlook on Village finances – General Fund revenues are precarious. State-shared revenues are down, interest income is negligible, closing of Borders expected to noticeably effect sales tax receipts, and new growth only \$1.5M as compared to budget assumption of \$7.5M. Also, reserves drawn down by \$2.0M over the last several years.



2. In response to these problematic conditions the Village implemented a cost-containment plan. Financial sustainability will require the Village to maintain status quo. It is anticipated the planned increase in the utility tax will be a necessary part of balancing the budget.
3. Funding capital projects is also becoming more challenging due to: decreased General Fund revenues; decreased grant opportunities; high level interest in projects such as MARS and next generation street resurfacing program; and the need to increase water accountability through the replacement of aging water meters. Capital funding options to be considered include: use of available funds, seek tax referendum, wait until 2017 when residential streetlight bond issue matures (at which time approximately \$300,000 in annual revenue becomes available).

Organizational Accomplishments- 2009 – 2011

To kick-off day two of the Strategic Planning Workshop, Village Manager Robert Pilipiszyn provided a review of the Village's accomplishments over the past two years. The general direction and guidance given by the Village Board during the 2009 strategic planning process has been documented and routinely monitored by staff—in Parts I and II of the Village's Operations Plan. Pilipiszyn noted that the Village's commitment to short and long-term planning has importantly led to the developed of a shared perspective between elected officials and staff. Following are his key highlights since the last planning process:

1. Since February 2010, the Village has conducted 20 workshops where policy was set, or consensus – direction on policy was provided or affirmed by the Village Board. These type of discussions were cited as a best practice because of the collaborative engagement of policy and operations. It was recommended that the Village continue with this business meeting model.
2. The scope and nature of the numerous policy discussions was identified as another accomplishment. Major policy areas addressed included: economic development; financial stability; public safety; pension funding; technology; sewer system capacity; and community vitality through land use policies.
3. The cost-containment plan facilitated organizational self-discipline. Strategic priorities requiring funding, such as branding, GIS, restoring full funding to the Part-time Police Officer program, were tabled. Approximately \$90,000 in cost savings due to statutory pension reform was reserved rather than used to additionally adjust actuarial assumptions. Union wage concessions and other shared sacrifices by employees was another example. Through this self-discipline, it was noted that the Village was still able to provide core services without lay-offs.
4. Despite certain financial, practical and other limitations, it was reported that considerable progress was made on many of the Village Board's strategic priorities. As a considerable amount of time and thought has been invested on strategic priorities, including those which have been slowed or set-aside as a result of the cost-containment plan, the Village is well-positioned to revisit them as conditions improve.



Goal-Setting

Having established solid historical and present perspectives for the strategic planning process, the future-forward planning work began following the Village Manager's opening remarks on Saturday morning, November 5, 2011. Participants were asked to read and review all the current strategic plan goals that had been written on individual cards on the "sticky wall." The cards were based on staff's most recent operational plan—including the "Top 12" and "Other 40" goals. This goal designation resulted from the staff organization and prioritization of the 2009 Strategic Plan.

Working first in small groups, participants were tasked with categorizing all of the goals under the "Pillars" (agreed-to the previous night). Each group received a random sorting of cards, and once all cards were sorted into the "Pillar" categories, Sikich facilitated a large group discussion—trying to determine the agreement about the placement of the cards.

Once participants felt the goals were appropriately sorted, Sikich began a consolidating and refining process. To ensure that staff had the necessary input to move forward with action planning at a later time, and thoroughly understand the Board's priorities, all needed to know what goals from the current plan were A) Completed, B) In-Process, or if there were any C) New/Strategic goals. Extensive dialogue between elected officials and staff helped to first define what had been accomplished; these items were then "subtracted," because there are not relevant to future actions. Next, the group endeavored to explore items that were in-process or required refinement to better communicate the desired result. Over a two-year period, progress, as well as changes in items such as environment, budget, and policy, can influence the definition and/or understanding of a goal.

Only after reaching consensus on all the goals that remained relevant and important to pursue was the group permitted to entertain new, or strategic goals. This approach is intentional, because strategic planning—to be effective and increase the likelihood of success—must involve not only visioning, but also understanding of organizational capacity. Especially in today's constrained economic environment, there are simply not sufficient resources to do all of the items on a wish list. Instead, plans should aim to recognize known constraints and prioritize those actions that are most critical to meet with programs and services.

In past strategic planning efforts, the Village has moved from goal-setting to action-planning and prioritization with the Board of Trustees conducting a voting process to rank the most strategic items. This year, group discussion and the organization of goal cards on the sticky wall (and within the "Pillar" framework) provided sufficient direction for ongoing action planning. Also, rather than sorting goals as "short-term" or "long-term" in nature, all strategic plan items have been targeted for completion within 18 to 24 months.

A list of the Village's priorities for 2012-2014 appears on the next page. In addition, a visual representation of the goal-setting process, with the goal cards, appears in the **Appendices** section of this report.



<i>Preserve and Enhance the Quality of Life We Enjoy in La Grange</i>	
<i>Maintain the Village's Strong Financial Position</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost Containment Plan continuation (ST) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore revenue trends & options • Legislature oversight & advocacy (shared revenue) (IP)
<i>Structure, Support & Develop Staff Resources to Deliver Core Services</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to evaluate new technology to maintain institutional knowledge & operational efficiencies (document management & retrieval) (ST) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve building permit processes & practices (IP) • Department Head goal attainment & constraints (IP) • Village Manager- organizational development (IP) • Communicating & posting public information (evaluate/explore) (IP) • Preservation of institutional knowledge
<i>Maintenance and Capital Planning for Our Aging Infrastructure</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewer System Capital Planning & Improvements- MARS (ST) • Roadway/Street capital maintenance program & replacement program (ST) • Water/System capital maintenance program & replacement program (ST) • Create facilities plan (ST) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Forest- Reforestation & EAB (IP)
<i>Delivery of Core Services</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to evaluate functional consolidation of core services (ST) • Continue Public Safety enforcement, education & enhancement efforts (ST) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Prevention Bureau / Update Fire codes (IP) • 911 Center technology improvements (IP) • Fire Station improvements- apparatus floor (IP) • Create & adapt organization-wide technology plan (IP)
<i>Community Vitality</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with existing economic development initiatives (ST) • Staff develop revised economic development plan & approach (ST) • Develop strategic parking management plan (ST) • Complete zoning code update (ST) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stone Avenue Train Station Renovation (IP) • Ongoing "Green" practices & technology (IP)



Conclusion

The result of the Strategic Planning Workshop is a new strategic plan for the Village of La Grange, but as the detail reveals, it is not an entirely new set of priorities. Rather, Village leaders remain keenly focused on and committed to the core values, as well as the programs and services prioritized through the Cost Containment Plan. We believe the Workshop was an important opportunity to bring the key decision-makers into a room and engage in dialogue that confirmed this consensus on future direction. With the meeting outcomes and feedback received, the organizational operations plan can now be reviewed and revised by staff.

This report's value will be best realized as a working guide for both the Village Board and staff. As you pursue the issues that were explored during the strategic planning process, thoughtful integration of the goals into action plans will be the key to successful follow-through. The next step is for staff to review the results and fine-tune these objectives in the action planning tools already in place. The Village has made great strides in the past several years in not only identifying, but acting on its strategic goals. Much has been accomplished but more challenges and successes lay ahead. As one noted organizational observer summarized the challenges of progress...

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



APPENDICES

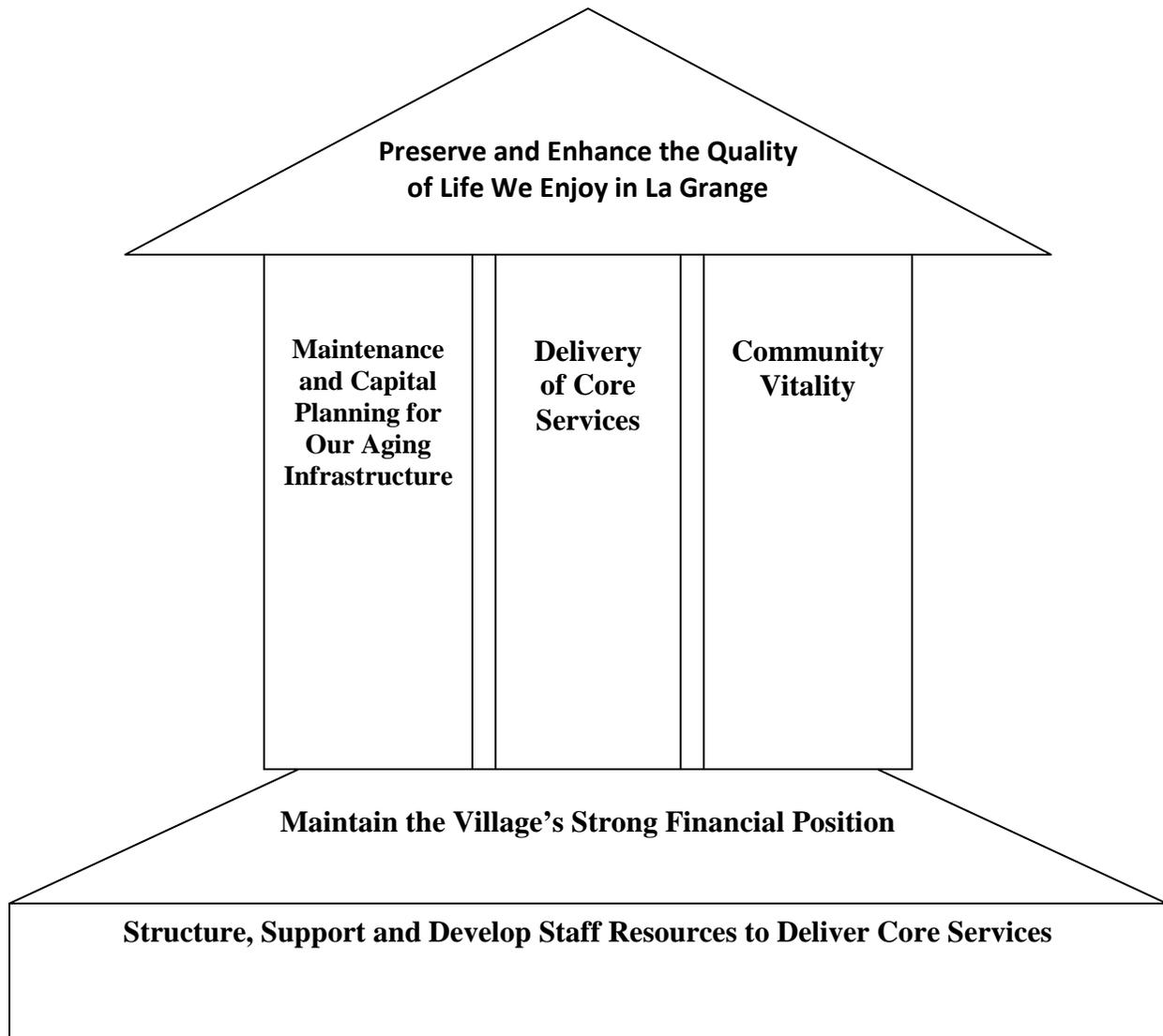
LA GRANGE STRATEGIC PLAN PILLARS

2012 - 2014 STRATEGIC PLAN VISUALS

MIND MAP OUTCOMES



LA GRANGE STRATEGIC PLAN PILLARS

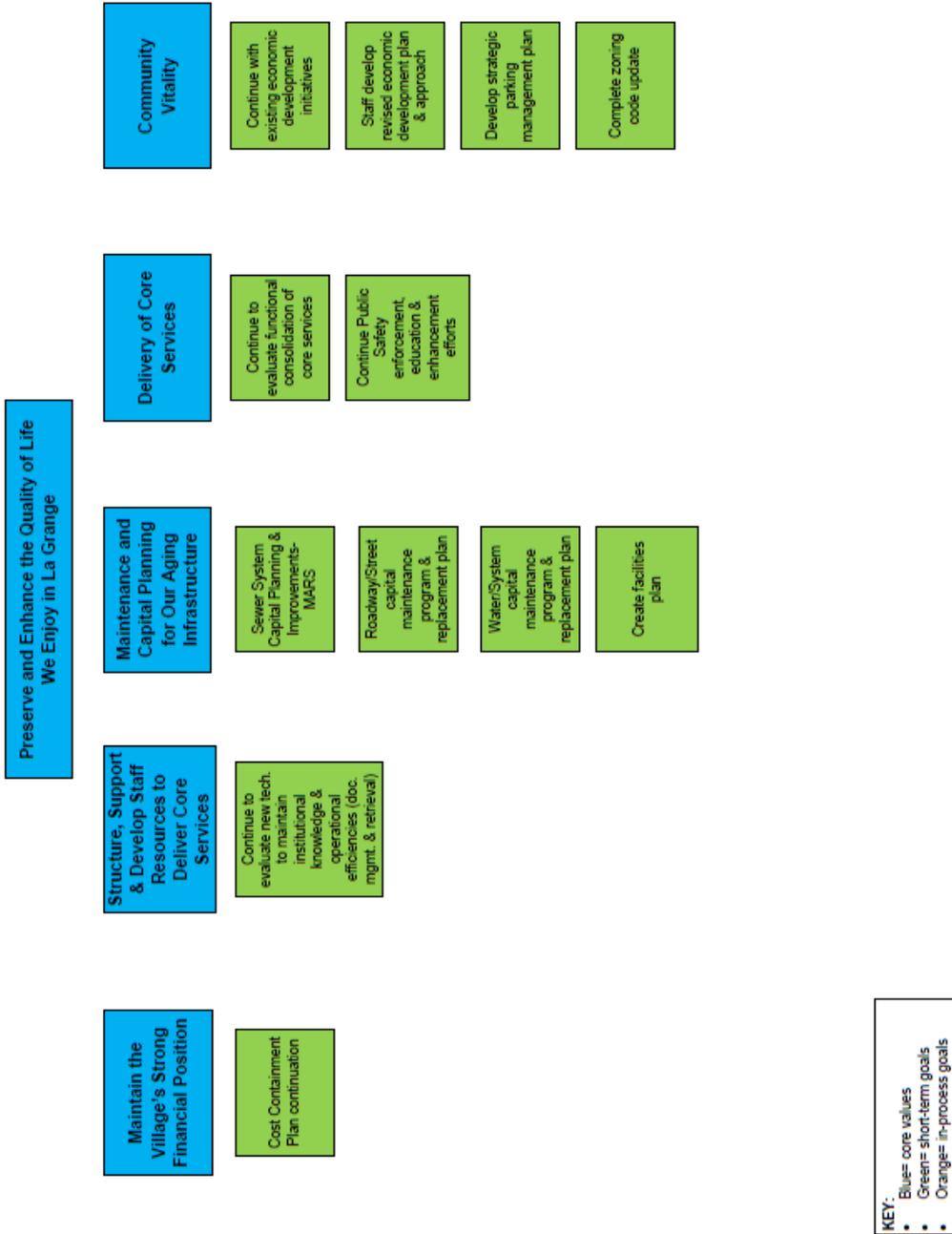




2012 - 2014 STRATEGIC PLAN VISUALS

Village of La Grange 2011 Strategic Planning Workshop

Strategic Plan Goals





Village of La Grange 2011 Strategic Planning Workshop

In-Process Goals

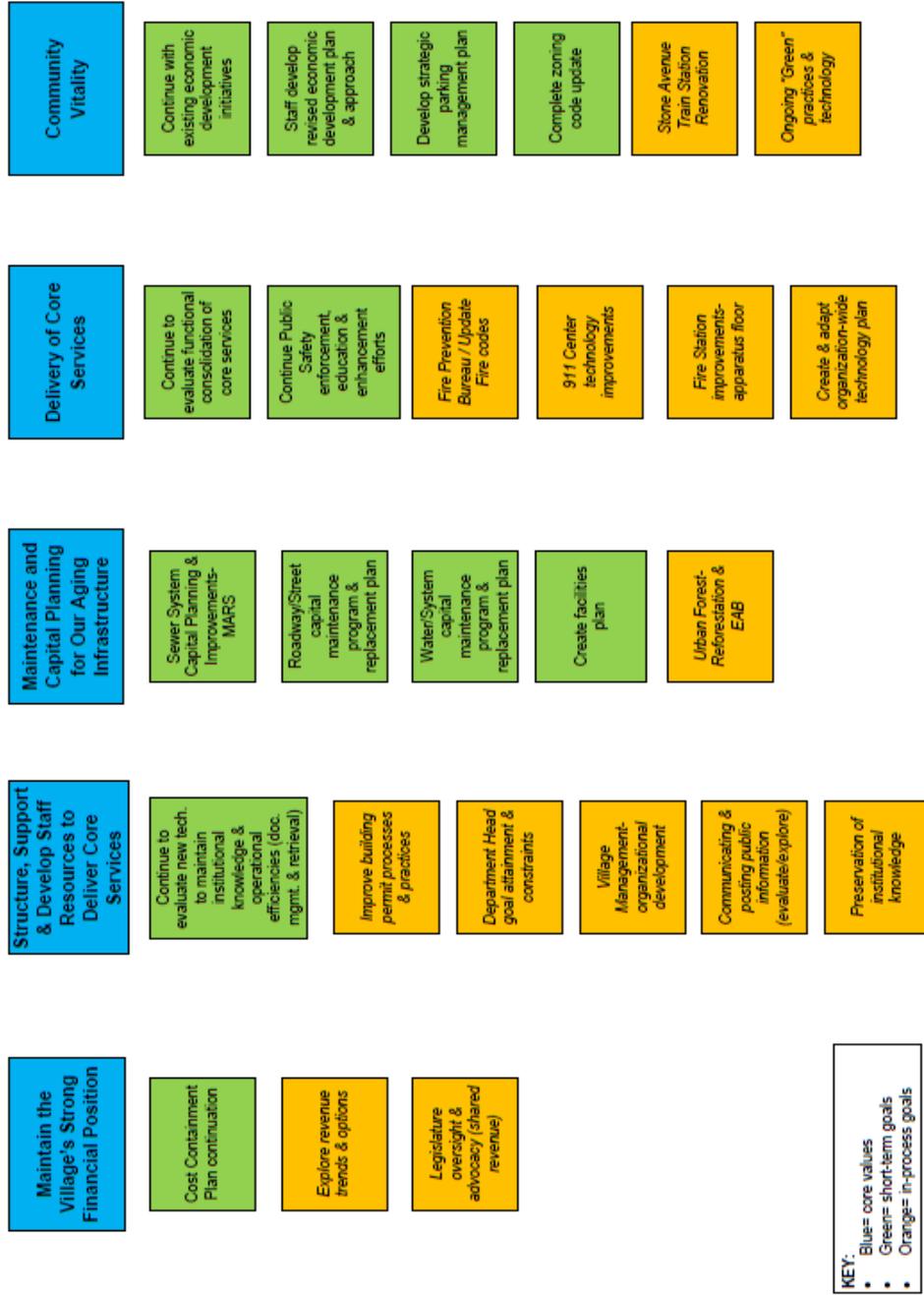
Stone Avenue Train Station Renovation	Explore revenue trends & options
Urban Forest- Reforestation & EAB	Legislature oversight & advocacy (shared revenue)
Fire Prevention Bureau / Update Fire codes	Department Head goal attainment & constraints
911 Center technology improvements	Village Management- organizational development
Improve building permit processes & practices	Communicating & posting public information (evaluate/explore)
Ongoing "Green" practices & technology	Create & adapt organization-wide technology plan
Fire Station improvements- apparatus floor	Preservation of institutional knowledge

KEY:
• Blue= core values
• Green= short-term goals
• Orange= in-process goals



Village of La Grange 2011 Strategic Planning Workshop
2012 - 2014 Strategic Plan

Preserve and Enhance the Quality of Life
We Enjoy in La Grange



KEY:
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MIND MAP OUTCOMES

