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January 2024

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2021–2026 STRATEGIC PLAN  
**Progress Report**

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Village Board adopted its five-year Strategic Plan in 2021 as a tool to ensure the priorities set by the Village Board are conveyed in the organization's goals, that objectives are clearly developed to meet the goals, and that overall village government is accountable for meeting community needs. The Strategic Plan has five multi-year goals, with each goal containing its own set of objectives.

Progress reports are prepared biannually in January and August.

## MISSION

The Village of Sussex is committed to preserving the high quality of life enjoyed by our residents, providing fiscally sound, responsive municipal services and delivering those services in an effective, efficient and professional manner. The Village will:

- Sustain appealing, safe, high-quality residential neighborhoods and business districts.
- Maintain an appropriate balance between residential and business land uses.
- Preserve and develop open spaces and cultural and recreational facilities. Develop and promote a strong sense of community by preserving a unique small town heritage.
- Consult with and involve Sussex residents in the Village's decision making, promote two-way communication between the Village Board and residents, and encourage an atmosphere of openness and receptivity to all ideas and issues.
- Continually evaluate services and plan for the future of the Village. Cooperate and work collegially with neighboring communities and governments. Be responsive to individual concerns and needs while keeping in mind the good of the community as a whole.

## GOALS



**Economic Growth**      **Infrastructure & Facilities**      **Quality of Life**  
**Citizen Engagement**      **Financially Sound**

## BY THE NUMBERS



**STRATEGIES UNDERWAY**      **12**

## LEARN MORE

Read the full five-year strategic plan at <https://www.villagesussex.org/government/strategic-plan>





# PROGRESS REPORT

## Village Board Priorities

The Village Board identified five goals in the 2021–2026 Strategic Plan. Each goal includes a number of objectives and benchmarks to further clarify the Board priorities. Each goal is championed by a staff member of the Village's Management Team and employees have aligned their annual performance goals to the Village's Strategic Plan. Below is a detailed progress report on each of the goals and corresponding objectives.

 Completed

 In Progress

 Not Started/  
Delayed

## Economic Development



### Attract and retain commercial establishments (retail, restaurants, and entertainment) with a focus on filling vacant buildings and keeping Sussex dollars local.

- Develop and implement an updated plan for commercial attraction, which includes an analysis of building vacancies and a target vacancy rate for commercial space in the Village.
- Develop a robust partnership with the Center for Growth and The Chamber, which includes routine updates from these organizations to the elected officials.
- Develop a marketing campaign targeted at identifying prospective entrepreneurs and connect those prospective entrepreneurs with the information and tools needed to start a business in Sussex.
- Research incentive, grant, or support programs that are significant enough to address market barriers and encourage new businesses to open in our community.



### Attract and retain primary employers that will bring quality jobs to the community.

- Develop strategies to attract, recruit, and retain primary employers with a focus on next generation businesses. Offer incentives for developers who bring quality jobs to the Village.
- Support Waukesha County Center for Growth in their industry attraction efforts.

### Status Update

- The Village had over 15 Plans of Operation for new businesses go through the Plan Commission in 2023, many of those businesses moving into the vacant spaces in the multi-tenant commercial buildings along Main Street. One of those new Plans of Operation was for a Dollar Tree that has taken the remaining vacant spaces in one of the Sussex Gateway Retail Center buildings.
- The Economic Development Master Fund Grant program is now available to small businesses in the Center Business District along Main Street. The Village continues to work with the Community Development Authority for redevelopment in the downtown, as well as other ways to promote activity in the downtown.
- Work is continuing on the renovation of the former 80,000-square-foot former Shopko building for an indoor sports training facility.

### Status Update

- The 150,000-square-foot Wangard spec industrial building in the new Highlands Business Park is now completely occupied by The Marek Group and Dornier Manufacturing Corp.
- Village staff continues to meet with the Waukesha County Center for Growth (WCCG) and has accompanied the WCCG on multiple business visits to discuss ongoing staffing, economic, and other hardships that the businesses are facing in today's climate to determine how the Village and WCCG can provide assistance.
- The Village will continue its own business retention and expansion program to ensure that businesses are aware of the Village's willingness to be a resource. Staff continues to work closely with the WCCG when prospective industrial or commercial users are looking for sites in Waukesha County to provide information to the WCCG for suitable land that would meet the requirements of the specific users.



## Maintain good roads in a fiscally responsible manner.

- Maintain the roads to a level that prevents premature road reconstruction, which includes annual road programs and routine maintenance.
- Continue increasing the annual funding to the Depreciation Fund for the Road Program, with the goal of reaching \$2 million allocated annually within five years.
- Research and evaluate alternate funding mechanisms and revenue sources to minimize borrowing.



## Ensure compliance with all utility regulations and adequate utility capacity to address future growth.

- Continue to monitor water and wastewater usage, capacity, and storage needs to determine when and where the Village needs to increase capacity.
- Update the Stormwater Management Plan, and incorporate the cost of the plan into the Depreciation Fund so the Village is adequately saving for these expenses.
- Monitor regulations for all utilities to understand future financial and operational impacts.

## Status Update

- Construction of the 2023 Road Program was completed by early September of 2023. Overall, the project cost was \$5,236,000. The project included repair and maintenance of 6.5 miles of road and associated utilities, paving of the Yard Waste Site driveway, and construction of the trail from Prospect Circle to the Vista Run subdivision as envisioned in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.
- Crackfilling for 2023 was completed in Hidden Hills, the asphalt at the Good Hope Road railroad crossing, and the areas north of Main Street between Elmwood Avenue and Waukesha Avenue.
- The design proposals for the 2025 Road Program are due in mid-January. The project includes Braddock Place, Ridgeview, Coldwater and other areas north of Good Hope, east of Maple, south of Plainview and west of the railroad. It also includes repairs to Richmond Road west of STH 164. The designer will also prepare plans and specifications for maintenance of the parking lots at the Public Works Garage, the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Public Safety Building, and Armory Park. During the 2024 Budget discussions, the Board approved an additional \$100,000 in Depreciation Funds for the road program, taking the annual depreciation to \$870,000.

## Status Update

### Wastewater

- Addressing inflow and infiltration into the sanitary sewer system is an ongoing effort so we don't have to treat unnecessary wastewater that infiltrated into the system. Repairs were made to the Northeast Interceptor this fall near Homestead Court to address leaks. Numerous leaks in the sanitary system were repaired during the 2023 Road Program project and repairs will be included in the 2025 Road Program if issues are found during the video inspection. In addition, a significant leak was found at a manhole near the Corporate Center which has been repaired. We have completed the video inspection of the interceptor sewer between the Bugline Trail and Silver Spring Drive and from there to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). This interceptor was in surprisingly good condition with only one small repair needed to a manhole near the plant.
- The WWTP Repairs Project has been scoped and the Design Request for Proposals is ready for release after a Technical Advisory Committee meeting with our partner communities at the end of January. Construction is scheduled for 2025. The existing plant has a capacity of about 5.1 million gallons per day (MGD), while the current average flow is about 1.7 to 2 MGD. Current challenges include chloride levels above our allowable limit, adjustments to chemical treatments to keep our phosphorus levels within limits as the influent strengths and compositions change, and sludge storage. We continue to work on options to address these issues.
- Our DNR Wastewater Permit expires in October 2024. Staff is working on the application for the new permit. We don't expect significant rule changes from DNR.
- The pilot Water Softener Rebate program is up and running as of January 1, 2024.



## **Water**

- The Woodside Tower Riser Pipe has been replaced.
- Salem standpipe is scheduled to be repainted in 2024.
- Our water tower maintenance contract expires in 2024 so a Request for Proposals will be prepared in the second half of the year.
- Verizon is pursuing an option to install a new antenna array and associated building at the Executive Drive Water Tower. The Board has approved the agreement, which will bring additional revenue to the Water Utility.
- The large meter replacement project continues. 2024 is year three of this four-year project.
- The Lead and Copper Rule Compliance Plan is underway.
- The Water Supply Evaluation Study is nearing completion. Preliminary data shows that additional water supply is going to be needed in the next couple of years. Staff is looking at options to address this.
- The water main has been constructed along CTH VV from Hamilton School entrance to Miller Way, completing the last of the loops needed at this time. Future looping needs will likely be triggered by new developments

## **Storm Water**

- The DNR is working on a Total Maximum Daily Load study of the Illinois Fox to which Sussex is tributary. The Village is postponing the Storm Water Management Master Plan until we know what targets we'll need to hit based on the DNR's study. The Village continues to monitor for grant opportunities to offset costs for the study and for storm water infrastructure improvements.



## + Reduce debt levels.

- Continue to invest in the pay-as-you-go, depreciation fund for capital items, with the goal of fully depreciating all capital expenditures and the annual road program.
- Analyze existing debt and opportunities to restructure/re-finance to reduce debt.
- Evaluate future Capital Improvement Plan projects for debt management opportunities.

## + Reduce the average cost burden for residents with the goal of being below the median cost when compared to peer communities.

- Identify this target cost and report on it annually as part of the budget.
- Explore possible cost saving measures by partnering with surrounding communities and organizations or by identifying opportunities to reduce costs within our operations.

## + Prepare for the end of growth.

- Study staffing needs at the end of growth. Continue the existing practice of budgeting and stepping in these additional employees.
- Study communities that are already done growing and learn from their story.

## + Attract and retain quality employees.

- Complete a salary study every three years. The Village's goal is to pay employees at 75% of the median pay rate.
- Budget for staff raises annually based on the market and continue with performance-based raises to reward high performing employees.
- Routinely complete anonymous employee engagement surveys.

## Status Update

- In the 2024 budget, annual depreciation was adjusted/increased to account for new capital items being purchased. All buildings and equipment are being fully depreciated.
- Our roads are the only remaining infrastructure items that have a depreciation gap. We will continue to recommend that the Village Board increase the annual depreciation for roads according to our project plan during each budget cycle. The 2024 budget increased the annual allocation of depreciation for roads by \$100,000 for a total of \$870,000 annual depreciation. These funds will be available for the 2024 Road Program and will reduce the total borrowing necessary for this project.
- In March 2023 the Village paid off \$530,000 in community development bonds that were callable. The payment of this debt came from existing funds on hand from TIF 6.

## Status Update

- The target median cost was identified and reported on as part of the 2024 budget. The Village continues to be ranked in the middle of our peer communities for total costs.
- The Village continues our partnership with the Village of Lannon to maintain their water system. We are also exploring future partnerships related to a new well that could serve both Lannon and Sussex.

## Status Update

- We continue to phase in the hiring of employees as we have done in the past. The 2024 budget included a new three-year phase in for a future public works employee.

## Status Update

- The Village completed the 2022 Compensation Study, which are completed every three years and benchmark our compensation with peer communities. The 2023 Adopted Budget included \$70,000 in market adjustments to address the identified gaps in several key non-managerial level positions. All but \$1,500 of the \$70,000 proposed for market adjustments were directed to frontline, non-supervisory positions, where the greatest market discrepancies were found. Nearly 70% of the funds addressed pay challenges in Public Works and Parks frontline employee pay. Administrative Assistants received 15% of the funds and the remaining was a combination of positions.
- The Village implemented a new pay progression program in 2024 to help move employees to the midpoint of their pay range more quickly. As part of this program, employees receive an additional 2.5% raise after their merit raise on January 1 if the employee is below the midpoint of their pay range on that date. As a three-year catch-up effort, employees who are in the same position automatically move to the midpoint of their pay range on January 1 following their six-year anniversary.
- The Village continues to budget for raises each year based on the market and continues to utilize a performance-based system for raises. For 2024, employee raises ranged from 3% to 5%.

# Financially Sound (continued)



- The Village has implemented a new employee engagement survey tool. The Village continues to score at or above benchmark organizations in all but one area. An Employee Vibe Committee has also formed to review the survey results and develop programs based on the employee feedback. This committee led the Employee Appreciation Picnic. They also discussed employee benefits and prioritized a few areas to research further for potential changes

## Quality of Life



### — Maintain high quality services.

- Identify a measureable level-of-service target for public-facing programs, track progress towards these goals, and report to the Board, including sufficient facilities and equipment.

### + Ensure Sussex is a family-friendly community.

- Update the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. As part of this process, identify potential amenities and programs for underserved populations (i.e. teen programs).
- Continue implementing the Village Park Master Plan to add new amenities and update existing ones. Meet with key stakeholders in park usage (ie. baseball clubs, Lions/SAS Club) to collaborate on functionality of park design.
- Explore the feasibility of adding more live music to Sussex's existing special events (i.e. Pints in the Park) or by adding new events and consider facility needs.
- Analyze recreation program offerings to identify service gaps.

### + Explore opportunities to construct a community pool/aquatics center.

- Research pools in similar size communities to estimate capital and operating costs, identify potential funding mechanisms, and learn best practices.
- Explore public and private partnerships for funding and usage to keep some of the cost burden off tax payers.
- Complete a feasibility study (hire a consultant) to identify community needs and refine cost estimates. As part of this study, determine if the Village should construct a smaller community pool at a lower cost to taxpayers or a larger aquatic center with more amenities.

### Status Update

- The goal is to quantify the services provided, how they impact the community, and increase the quality of life afforded to the citizens of Sussex. Due to staff turnover and competing priorities, this objective has been pushed back to 2024.

### Status Update

- The Park and Open Space Plan (Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan) will be completed in early 2024 having utilized two in-person public input opportunities and a survey that was accessible for 30 days. The survey collected 490 responses from the community.
- Design for the Village Park Master Plan Phase B will begin in January 2024; stakeholders/frequent user groups will be encouraged to be a part of the design process and provide input.
- Live music sponsorships are being solicited again this year for Pints in the Park. Additionally, we are adding a band to our Main Street Block Party weekend (August 10-11, 2024) to celebrate 100 years of Sussex.
- We will continue to address identified service gaps in our programming. We are increasing fitness offerings in 2024 based on feedback we have received. We are also implementing a new Leaders in Training program for Day Camp this year, which will target teens, a known underserved group.

### Status Update

- A Pool Feasibility Study contract has been signed with Councilman-Hunsaker. This firm has been providing design and operational consulting for aquatic projects for more than 50 years. The feasibility study will provide us with a complete working plan for the creation of a new aquatic facility including: needs analysis; market analysis; preliminary program development; market and competition analysis; site analysis; aquatic facility conceptual planning and an estimated capital cost; as well as an operations plan that shows revenue and expense projections.
- There will be extensive opportunities for community engagement, including both in-person and virtual community meetings, an online survey, and a virtual engagement platform. The study will commence July 2024.

# Citizen Engagement



## + Better understand topics and issues that are important to the public.

- Research and identify new opportunities to engage with the public.
- Identify and routinely report on metrics that measure public engagement.
- Research and present options for a community wide survey to be conducted routinely to evaluate service levels and identify issues of importance to the public.

## + Solicit feedback on specific projects, topics, and services of interest to the public.

- Continue to seek public input for all major projects (i.e. major road reconstructions, park projects, library project, etc.).

## Status Update

- From October 2021 through December 2022 the Village completed an initial pulse survey process to collect general feedback from the public. The surveys were posted on social media platforms, the website, and available at the front counter in the Civic Center. The results were distributed to the Village Board. In 2023 surveys were posted by request of staff or the Village Board.
- The Village continues to adapt our social media presence. In 2023 we kicked off a “Did you know...?” segment that features services that may not be well-known throughout the community. Examples included vacation checks conducted by our Police Department and free medical and sharps disposal options. We will continue these posts along with the very popular “What’s Your Question Wednesday” in 2024. We will also celebrate the Village’s 100-year anniversary by posting photos on social media—both old and new—throughout the year.
- Engagement metrics were incorporated into the Strategic Plan Report in 2023, with plans to continue adding metrics in the coming years.

## Status Update

- In 2023, The Park and Open Space Plan (Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan) utilized two in-person public input opportunities and a survey that was accessible for 30 days. The survey collected 490 responses from the community. The public input will shape the updated Park and Open Space Plan in 2024.

2023 Social Media Followers/Subscribers		
Platform	Followers/Subscribers	Change From 2022
Facebook	7,337	↑ 762
NextDoor	3,548	↑ 420
Instagram	1,019	↑ 104
Twitter/X	398	↑ 22

Social Media Reach		
Reach	2022	2023
<i>The number of people/unique accounts who saw any content from or about your Page, including posts, stories, ads.</i>		
Facebook	125,433	205,033
Instagram	3,702	4,173
Impressions	2022	2023
<b>NextDoor</b> <i>Unique views of posts and unique opens and clicks of any email notifications.</i>	19,822 (36 posts)	6,702 (17 posts)
<b>Twitter/X</b> <i>Number of times users saw your Tweets.</i>	12,040	18,502

2023 Top Social Media Posts		
Platform	Post	Reach/Reactions
Facebook	5/18 Did you know/Vacation checks	55,012/391
Instagram	5/5 Park bubblers are on	931/37

Email Updates (eBlasts)		
Subscribers	Total Emails Sent	Open Rate
1,483	79,876	61%

2023 Recorded Meetings			
Quarter	Views	Unique Viewers	Video w/Most Views
Q1	46	17	Plan Commission 1/17 (13 views)
Q2	45	22	Plan Commission 4/18 (6 views)
Q3	14	6	Village Board 8/22 (8 views)
Q4	15	7	Village Board 11/29 (6 views)