

STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY REPORT





May 12, 2026

Dear President Hribal and Manager Krumstok,

I am pleased to present the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan and Summary Report to the Village of Westchester. This plan reflects the community's strong sense of identity and a forward-looking approach to addressing key priorities for the community. While maintaining a focus on high-quality core services, the Strategic Plan establishes a clear framework to achieve the Village's goals through proactive decision-making.

Arriving at the updated Vision, Mission, and organizational goals required months of diligent work, including extensive community input, stakeholder engagement, and thoughtful evaluation of both opportunities and challenges unique to the Village. It has been an honor to support Westchester in this important process. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Board and staff for their leadership, collaboration, and commitment to shaping a strong future for Westchester.

Yours Truly,

Cory Poris Plasch
President/CEO
CP2 Consulting

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Executive Summary

Beginning in July 2025, the Village of Westchester initiated a strategic planning process to define a clear and actionable path forward. This effort was grounded in community priorities, including maintaining a high quality of life, strengthening economic development, addressing infrastructure needs, and enhancing organizational effectiveness.

The Strategic Plan consists of five strategic goals that are of most importance to the Village over the next four years. Each goal has an associated outcome, key outcome indicator, and performance target. These were arrived at through a facilitated process that incorporated feedback from the board and staff, and reflects stakeholder feedback from focus groups and an internal stakeholder survey.

As part of the process, the Village evaluated and updated its Vision and Mission statements to reflect the current goals and future direction. A cross-functional team of Village staff played a key role in developing initiatives that support each strategic goal and will continue to lead implementation efforts. These initiatives are designed to translate strategic priorities into actionable steps, supported by ongoing performance tracking and regular reporting. This approach ensures that the Strategic Plan serves not only as a guiding document, but as a practical tool to drive measurable progress, strengthen organizational alignment, and deliver meaningful outcomes for the Westchester community.



Vision and Mission

Vision

Westchester will be a safe, clean, and healthy community, fiscally sound and providing a balance of growth and opportunity for both residents and businesses. All are valued in this welcoming, innovative, and collaborative community.

Mission

We are focused on enhancing the quality of life in Westchester through dedication to safety, professionalism delivered with compassion, and providing reliable, cost-effective services that support our strong sense of community.



The Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Planning Process seeks to answer five questions:

1. Where are we right now? (Plan Development)
2. Where do we want to be? (Plan Development)
3. How do we get there from here? (Plan Implementation)
4. How will we know when we get there? (Plan Implementation)
5. Are there changes in the future external environment that we need to consider?

DEVELOPMENT

Where are we now?

Scan the Environment
Conduct Internal and External Analysis
(SWOT)
Develop a Strategic Profile
Identify Strategic Challenges

Where are we going?

Define Our Mission
Articulate Core Values
Set a Vision
Identify Key Intended Outcomes

IMPLEMENTATION

How will we get there?

Develop Initiatives
Define Performance Measures
Set Targets and Thresholds
Spread Throughout Organization

How will we know?

Create Detailed Action Plans
Establish Accountability:
Who, What, When
Identify Success Indicators

Assessing the Current Environment

The Strategic Planning Process began with a meeting with the consultant and Village staff. The meeting included a review of strategic planning principles, a discussion of organizational value proposition, the status of vision and mission statements, and a tutorial on preparing an Environmental Scan. The session concluded with a timeline for the planning process, assignments for preparation of the Environmental Scan, and a process for conducting the stakeholder outreach.



Stakeholder Engagement

To answer the question “Where are we now?”, the Strategic Planning Process began with gaining an understanding of the operating environment. This is the first activity in developing a Strategic Plan as internal and external forces, dynamics, and constraints must be considered to arrive at the most effective strategy.

Assessing the environment included:

- Community survey
- Internal stakeholder survey of employees
- Focus groups

As environmental factors change over time, they need to be evaluated and incorporated into the strategic thinking and planning process using current data. As a result, the focus groups were limited in scope and consisted of businesses, nonprofits, residents, and employees of the Village. Each focus group discussed what participants saw as strengths of Westchester along with opportunities for change.

The results of these efforts were presented to the Village Board at the first Strategic Planning Session on October 14, 2025 and are summarized below.



External Stakeholder (Community) Survey Results

An External Stakeholder (Community) Survey was conducted August 18 through October 7, 2025. External Stakeholders refers to individuals or groups who are outside the organization but are affected by the actions of the organization and the quality of life in the community. These include, but are not limited to, businesses, neighborhoods, residents of all ages, historically excluded populations, special interest groups, educational facilities including K-12 schools and higher education, and other taxing jurisdictions.

Key Takeaways

- The survey had 758 responses, with 94% indicating they are a resident of Westchester, 61% a homeowner in the Village, 5% a property owner other than a home, and 3% a business owner in the Village.
- When asked what they liked best about living in Westchester, the top four answers were location, a peaceful community, a clean community, and affordability.
- Respondents indicated that the most essential needs for quality of life in Westchester are public safety (94%), affordability/cost of living (73%), neighborhood appearance (73%), Village services (68%), and housing (64%). More than 20% of respondents indicated that public transit (23%) and employment opportunities (22%) are not very or not at all important to their quality of life in Westchester.
- More than 75% of respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with the following services/features in Westchester: quality of life (81%), police (79%), parks and park facilities (78%), fire and emergency medical response (76%). More than 20% were very or somewhat dissatisfied with arts and cultural opportunities (32%) and the school system (25%).
- When asked what are the most important things for a strong and healthy community, the top responses were a sense of safety and security (71%), high-quality schools (45%), high-quality Village services (41%), and well-maintained residential and commercial properties (37%).
- The following were deemed “essential” to the future of Westchester: a safe community (93%), affordable Village services (82%), a well-maintained community (78%), and a good place to raise a family (76%).
- Over 75% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with the following statements:
 - The Village should invest in projects and programs that enhance the quality of life for all community members. (87%)
 - Providing a safe and healthy environment is the highest priority of the Village’s government. (86%)
 - A high-quality school system is an important factor in the success of the community. (81%)
 - The Village should invest in creating jobs and growing local businesses. (76%)

Internal Stakeholder Survey Results

A survey of internal stakeholders was conducted August 18 through October 7, 2025, as part of the strategic planning process. Internal stakeholders are individuals or groups who are within the organization by virtue of being elected to or employed/appointed by the organization. They are essential to the successful implementation of the strategic plan, so their input is ideally incorporated into the process. Additionally, they often have key information based upon their interaction with the community and can identify emerging community themes.

Key Takeaways

- There were 37 responses to the survey, all employees of Westchester.
- Most respondents rated the overall quality of services in Westchester as Excellent (24%) or Good (43%).
- When asked what city services need improvement, infrastructure and building repairs, staffing, and emergency services equipment and staffing came up most often in open text responses.
- When asked what Westchester does well, Public Works, communications (internal and to the community), and emergency services training were most often mentioned.
- When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Westchester, 11% rated it as excellent, 57% as good, and 27% as fair.
- When asked what one improvement could have the greatest positive impact on quality of life in Westchester, comments included economic development, spending on infrastructure, building renovations, adding bike racks, adding a new fire station and equipment, increasing staff levels, and transparency to residents.
- Respondents identified the following as the highest priorities for the Village over the next 3-5 years: Facility and equipment quality and conditions (95%), infrastructure (80%), and public safety (78%).
- Respondents somewhat or strongly agreed with the following statements:
 - Westchester does a good job communicating with residents (84%)
 - Westchester operates with openness and transparency (78%)
 - Westchester is open to new ideas and ways of doing things (70%)
 - I would recommend Westchester as a place to live (61%)
- 86% strongly or somewhat agreed they are likely to stay with Westchester for another year, 78% strongly or somewhat agreed they would apply for the position again, and 65% strongly or somewhat agreed they would recommend working at Westchester to friends.

Focus Group Results

As part of the Village's strategic planning process, six focus groups were conducted October 3 through 6, 2025. Focus groups included two employee groups and four community/business groups. Participants shared their perspectives on what they value about Westchester, the challenges facing the community, desired changes, and priorities for the future.

A Focus Group is a small-group discussion, guided by a trained facilitator, used to gather in-depth information about a community's thoughts and opinions about a designated topic. The interaction enables participants to ask questions of each other, as well as to re-evaluate and reconsider their own understandings of their specific experiences. The facilitator's role is to gather information in an impartial and confidential manner, manage the pace of the discussion, and ensure that everyone has a chance to participate. The process included a set of questions and follow-up discussion within the small group.



Focus Group Results (cont.)

Key Takeaways

What Participants Like About Westchester

- Location and Accessibility: A strong, central location with convenient access to expressways, O'Hare, Chicago, and regional amenities.
- Sense of Community and Neighborliness: A welcoming, family-oriented community with a small-town feel and strong neighborhood connections.
- Diversity: Westchester was described as a "melting pot" with residents from various socioeconomic levels, cultures, races, and backgrounds.
- Housing Quality and Affordability
- Safety and Walkability

Key Challenges Facing the Community

- Lack of Central Downtown/Business District: The absence of an identifiable downtown area was mentioned by every single focus group as a critical challenge.
- Economic development and business retention, particularly restaurants and entertainment venues.
- Infrastructure Deficiencies emerged as a significant concern, particularly in employee focus groups.
- High School Reputation and Quality
- Communication and Transparency Issues
- Staffing and Resource Constraints
- Facilities Conditions
- Resident Expectations and Understanding do not match available resources.
- Board Dynamics and Governance Concerns

Focus Group Results (cont.)

What Participants Would Change

- Economic Development Strategy and Vision
- Infrastructure Investment and Maintenance
- Improved Communication and Transparency
- Addressing School Quality
- Breaking Down Organizational Silos
- Property Acquisition and Development Control
- Code Enforcement and Property Maintenance
- Employee-specific recommendations included facilities improvements, staffing increases, training and professional development, compensation, clearer priorities, and developing a middle management culture.

What to Think About for the Future

- Vision and Strategic Planning
- Revenue Diversification
- Specific Development Opportunities such as sports complexes and recreational facilities, entertainment districts, mixed-use development, and arts and culture.
- Community Identity and Marketing
- Demographic Planning
- Organizational Effectiveness
- Work Culture and Employee Wellbeing
- Physical Infrastructure and Beautification

Understanding the Environment

An integral part of the Strategic Planning Process is a SWOT Analysis, which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It provides a situational overview of the environment in which strategic planning takes place and allows a systematic examination of factors impacting the community. **Strengths and Weaknesses** examine the internal operating environment, while **Opportunities and Threats** evaluate the external operating environment.

To provide ample opportunity for reflection, a SWOT survey was distributed to the Board Members and staff prior to the Strategic Planning session. During the Strategic Planning Retreat, the SWOT data was reviewed to determine key themes and strategic issues.



SWOT Analysis

S STRENGTHS	W WEAKNESSES	O OPPORTUNITIES	T THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased and continuing infrastructure improvement • Geographic location – major roads, natural surroundings • Staff and elected officials – experienced, dedicated, professional, integrity • Much improved transparency • Diverse community, staff, officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board and staff disconnect – lack of cohesion/trust • Lack of overall community trust • Conditions of infrastructure (internal and external) • Board and staff communications • Lack of economic development • Overall financial health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development/growth • Financial growth and diversity • Community rebranding/image • Modernize facilities and infrastructure • Relationship building locally, regionally, state-wide and beyond • Process and operation improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Distrust • Infrastructure mandates • Recruitment • Ineffective business climate • Non-home rule

The Strengths and Opportunities groups combined to discuss how internal strength coupled with external opportunities could be enablers of success.

The Weaknesses and Threats groups combined to discuss how internal weaknesses coupled with external threats could be challenges to success.

Then, the groups combined, and all participants reviewed the key themes. A list of strategic issues was determined, and included infrastructure, economic development, communication and flow of information, transparency, recruitment and improved governance.

Finally, the most important organizational priorities were finalized taking into account information gathered throughout the process, including the Environmental Scan.

Through this analysis, five Strategic Goals were identified: **Economic Development, Energized Workforce, Clear and Consistent Communications, Sustainable Future, and Increased Trust.**

Participants were then divided into cross-functional groups. They determined desired Outcomes (what success looks like), Key Outcome Indicators (how to measure progress towards success), and Performance Targets (a measurable goal achieved by a defined date) for each Strategic Goal.

Targets by Strategic Goal

STRATEGIC GOAL Economic Development

OUTCOME	KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR	TARGET	INITIATIVE
A progressive business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # businesses added # of desired businesses with parameters documented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase # of businesses Clear parameters for desired businesses determined by 12/27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic development plan
Development of Mannheim/Roosevelt Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # RDAs executed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute an RDA for phase 1 by 12/31/26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create plan to execute RDA
Become a business-friendly community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # businesses with improved exteriors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentivize at least 3 businesses to improve exterior appearance by 5/27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Façade Program Process

STRATEGIC GOAL Energized Workforce

OUTCOME	KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR	TARGET	INITIATIVE
Improved Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # days to fill position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce time to fill by __% by __ (date) (generally from the time a vacancy is known until an offer is extended to a qualified candidate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update competitive salary and non-compensation package analysis
Process Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # days to fill position # core processes reviewed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce time to fill by __% by __ (date) Evaluate # of core processes annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update hiring strategy Create a core process review plan for efficiencies
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % good employees retained % positive survey results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease by __% good employee turnover by __ (date) Increase employee satisfaction on employee survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory building assets and prioritize for improvements Retention improvement plan

Targets by Strategic Goal (cont.)

STRATEGIC GOAL Clear and Consistent Communications

OUTCOME	KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR	TARGET	INITIATIVE
Residents experience clearer, faster and more helpful responses from the Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % positive survey results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive post-interaction feedback results increase ___% by ___ (date) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a village customer service code of conduct and have all staff trained on it and review it annually
Westchester has a positive public image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % positive survey responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Image is ___% positive by ___(date) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a “Westchester Forward” campaign that highlights new programs, community wins, and resident/community partnerships
Village Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # updates sent to community • Project milestones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two updates to the community per year summarizing progress on the strategic plan • Add a community Q&A/FAQ to the website and the Transparency Portal by ___(date) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a community survey • Develop a strategic plan reporting structure • Create FAQ content and structure for the website



Targets by Strategic Goal (cont.)

STRATEGIC GOAL Sustainable Future

OUTCOME	KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR	TARGET	INITIATIVE
Diversity in revenue sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of grant eligible projects ready # grants applied for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ in grant funding matches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> __# of grant eligible, shovel ready projects ready by __ (date) Increase # of grants applied for by __% by __ (date) Increase grant match funding by __\$ by __ (date) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shovel ready project plan Grant and funding strategy
Reliable Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # internal infrastructure improvements prioritized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> __% of internal infrastructure improvements prioritized by __ (date) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities study
Proactive Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Comp Plan funding obtained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue funding for Comp Plan 2028 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment inventory Comp Plan revenue strategy

STRATEGIC GOAL Increased Trust

OUTCOME	KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR	TARGET	INITIATIVE
Transparency: Increased perceived resident transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # reports to residents # goals met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measurable benchmark targets reported quarterly to residents with set levels/goals (baseline data available __ (date)) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Transparency plan
Resident satisfaction with Village information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % positive survey responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of __% in positive resident satisfaction survey results regarding communications by __ (date) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop formal communication plan
Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # annual training summits # "commandments" added to code of conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> __# of Annual training summit Add "6 commandments" to code of conduct by __ (date) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan training prioritization and training calendar

Strategic Plan Implementation

Implementation is the final step in the Strategic Planning Process and consists of staff developing Initiatives to support the Strategic Goals determined during the Strategic Planning Process. The following Initiatives will be reported on regularly, showing the measurable progress the Village of Westchester is making towards their Strategic Goals and associated Performance Targets.

Economic Development

- Economic development plan
- Create plan to execute RDA
- Update Facade Program Process

Energized Workforce

- Update competitive salary and non-compensation package analysis
- Update hiring strategy
- Establish a Core Process Review strategy
- Inventory building assets and prioritize for improvements

Clear and Consistent Communications

- Develop a village customer service code of conduct including training
- Launch a “Westchester Forward” campaign that highlights new programs, community wins, and resident/community partnerships
- Create a community survey
- Develop a strategic plan reporting structure
- Create FAQ content and structure for the website

Sustainable Future

- Shovel ready project plan
- Grant and funding strategy
- Facilities study
- Equipment inventory
- Comp Plan revenue strategy

Increased Trust

- Communications Transparency plan
- Develop formal communication plan
- Develop training prioritization and training calendar

Strategic Plan Participants

The strategic plan was developed with the hard work and dedication of many individuals. The Village Board and Staff led the way, taking time out of their schedules to commit to long-term thinking. They defined a direction and a set of outcomes that are important to the community stakeholders with whom they partner and serve.

Village Board

President
Greg Hribal

Clerk
Sophia Collins

Trustee
Gia Marie Benline

Trustee
Brian Cross

Trustee
Terrance Jones

Trustee
Peter Marzano

Trustee
Evie Slavic

Trustee
Victoria M Vann

Village Staff

Village Manager
Barry Krumstok

Chief of Police
Daniel Babich

Deputy Village Clerk
Annie Canavan

Public Works Foreman
Steve Crowley

Deputy Chief Patrol
Michael Fellers

Accounting Manager
Stefan Hanus

Fire Chief
Daniel Manning

**Community
Development Director**
Jim Novosel

Consultant

Cory Poris Plasch, President, CP2 Consulting

