

The Village of Decatur

Strategic Plan 2018-2020



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Village of Decatur Public Officials

Ali Elwaer	Village President
Charlene Jackson	Village President Pro-tem
Tom Stull	Village Trustee
Robert Mead Jr.	Village Trustee
Kim Gunther	Village Trustee
Cindy Pachner	Village Trustee
Ken Hayes	Village Trustee
Aaron Mitchell	Village Manager
Matt Newton	Village Clerk/Treasurer
Tom VanDerwoude	Chief of Police
Jimmy Ebeling	DPW Forman

Preface

The Village of Decatur underwent the Strategic Planning Process in the summer and fall of 2017. The process was an ongoing dialogue between employees, department heads, Council members and residents. Each stakeholder has taken time to analyze and discern different points of emphasis with their individual unique perspective looking at the operations of the Village of Decatur.

The 2018-2020 Strategic Plan is attempting to encompass the direction that is best for The Village of Decatur. That, the same as all plans, can change. This shall be used as a guide going forward until 2021 as the guiding principle with Village operations.

Summary of Conclusion of 2015-2017 Strategic Plan

As we are looking forward to 2018-2020 Strategic Plan, it is important to look back and see how we have previously done reaching our goals. The 2017-2020 Strategic Plan consisted of 4 major issues. They are listed below with examples of how they were addressed.

1. The Village of Decatur currently operates under ordinances that are outdated, inconsistent, and generally ineffective.
 - a. Rewrite of Burning, Blight and Zoning Ordinances
 - b. Ordinance rewrites have enforcement in mind and has streamlined efforts for compliance
2. The Village water quality is in need of improvement.
 - a. The Village has investigated what the costs would be for different treatment types and possible well changes.
 - b. DPW have implemented a regular hydrant flushing schedule.
 - c. The Village of Decatur is completing a Water Asset Management Plan to know how to proceed for improved water quality
3. There is too much blight in the Village of Decatur.
 - a. Complete re-write of Blight Ordinance.
 - b. Enforcement has been made much easier with new Ordinance.
 - c. Pursuing landowners as well as tenants on rental properties' violations.
4. The current wages and benefits offered lead to potentially high turnover of staff.
 - a. Every position except VM has received substantial raises to bring wages in line with neighboring communities.
 - b. Department Heads are paid based on studies done with comparable communities.
 - c. Retirement Program is switched to MERS in hopes of a better return on investment.
 - d. The Village of Decatur has increased Employer contribution to each employee's Retirement Program from 3% to 4.5%

Village of Decatur Mission Statement

The mission of the Village of Decatur government is to provide quality public services at the lowest possible tax rate that will promote health, comfort, safety and convenience to its citizens and the community.

Planning Process

The Planning Process took place over multiple months in the summer and fall of 2017. The Village of Decatur created a Satisfaction Survey that allowed for residents to rate all departments with 5 objective questions, along with the allowance for them to make statements about positive and negative aspects of the Village of Decatur. The survey was advertised in the local paper and the Village of Decatur Facebook page. There were physical copies of the survey made available at the Utility Billing front desk, along with being available on our website; decaturmi.org, the Village of Decatur's Facebook page also directed viewers to the website. Surveys completed online would instantly be sent to the Village Manager email. The Satisfaction Survey was posted and made available for over a month. At that point the Village Manager tabulated and made a summary of the results to Village Council during a Regular Council Meeting. Those items were then included into the data portion of the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan. The retrieval of data is based on the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis method.

In November there was a Public Hearing scheduled to hear from the Village of Decatur residents at a Council Workshop. At that Workshop, the public had their chance to give their opinion on where the focus of the Village should be for the years 2018-2020. The Council joined the conversation. In order to receive the Village of Decatur employee's perspective; the Village Manager met with employees in small meetings along with individually to discuss the topic. Work schedules made this difficult for some Decatur Police Officers. Those not in attendance were given a handout that would allow for their input to still be considered throughout the Planning Process.

Analysis

During the Analysis phase, sets of meetings took place to take the list below that represents the extent of the responses, and summarize the responses with 4 Major Issues that should be addressed in the years 2018-2020.

The responses were listed and compiled as seen in Table below:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Decatur Residents	Storm Sewer System
Employees	Economic Development
Good-intentioned Council	Skills Are Not Always Being Compensated
Solid Infrastructure	Water Quality
Debt Free	No Grant Writer
Diverse Employers	Appearance of Transparency
Financial Stability	Cost of Employee Turnover
Competent/Facilitating/Engaging VM	Lack of Council Direction
Employees Work Together	Additional Training
Facilities	Level of Benefits
Equipment	On-Call Procedures
Connection to Community	No Pension
Excellent Chief	Succession Planning
Tight-knit Community	Need creation of more SOP's
Increased Focus on Training	Consistent and Coherent Vision/Mission
Opportunities	Threats
Fund Balance	Employee Turnover
Rebuilt PD	Rates Increase
SAW Improvements	Crime/Police Calls
Money Invested in Parks and Recreation	Council not following Ethics Ordinance
Specialized PD Roles for Officers	Demanding Council, not Requests
\$ Assist for College	Changing Technology
PD Training	Officer Turnover
School Resource Officer	State/Federal Requirements
Hire a Code Enforcement Officer	Facilities/Vehicles Upkeep
Old High School Building	Revenue Sharing/Tax Revenue Variability
Website /Electronic Resources	Lack of Community Feedback
Interoffice Paperless Initiatives	Professionalism

The Village of Decatur has assembled the following plan to resolve the issues, while retaining and improving the assets of the Village. Along with each step are the expected roles that will be involved with the progression.

Strategic Goals and Objectives for the Years 2018-2020

Issue #1

The Village of Decatur water quality is poor and needs improvement.

Why: *The Village of Decatur residents have felt for a long time that the quality of water supplied from the Village of Decatur is subpar, and an improvement in taste appearance and smell would be much appreciated.*

Goal

Improve the taste and quality of water throughout the Village.

Objective #1

Discover what exactly will improve the quality of water in the Village of Decatur

Action Steps

1) Research contents and history of water system in Decatur

Responsible Party- Village Manager, DPW Forman and Engineers

2) Assess options available for corrective actions

Responsible Party- Village Manager, DPW Forman, Vendors and Engineers

3) Bring options to Council for consideration

Responsible Party- Village Manager

Objective #2

Decide what should be done to the water for improvement

Action Steps

1) Research the costs options to improve water

Responsible Party-Village Manager, DPW Forman, Vendors and Engineers

2) Bring all options and costs to Village Council

Responsible Party-Village Manager

3) Seek out what Village residents wish to be done for water quality

Responsible Party- Village Manager and Village Council

Objective #3

Implement improvement to water system

Action Steps

1) Approve changes at Council Meeting

Responsible Party- Village Council

2) Implement changes

Responsible Party- Village Manager, DPW Forman, Vendors and Engineers

Issue #2

The Village of Decatur must seek out potential Economic Development opportunities.

Why: *The Village of Decatur has some available properties that are not currently being used and possess the potential to create additional improvements to the community along with additional tax revenue.*

Goal

Increase the level of Economic Development in the Village of Decatur

Objective #1

Make the Village of Decatur as inviting as possible for potential developers

Action Steps

1) Assess potential improvements of infrastructure to potential redevelopment sites

Responsible Party- Village Manager, DPW and Engineers

2) Improve infrastructure to potential redevelopment sites

Responsible Party- Village Manager, DPW, Engineers and Village Council

Objective #2

Find interested developers for available properties in Decatur

Action Steps

1) Become RRC Certified

Responsible Party- Village Manager, Village Clerk/Treasurer, MEDC Cat Team Coordinator and Village Council

2) Market the properties with Van Buren County Economic Developer

Responsible Party- Village Manager and VBCED

Issue #3

The Village of Decatur does not always have the most professional reputation.

Why: Many different interactions are affected by the level of professional one hopes to receive during dealings with the Village of Decatur. Whether it is employee, resident or public meetings; one hopes for the most professional environment as possible, that has not always been the case.

Goal

Increase the level of professionalism in all aspects of the Village of Decatur.

Objective #1

Operate with professional Policies and Procedures

Action Steps

1) Assess the Policies and Procedures with Department Heads

Responsible Party- Village Manager, Clerk/Treasurer, DPW Forman and Chief of Police

2) Create new Policies and Procedures when needed with an emphasis on professionalism

Responsible Party- Village Manager, Clerk/Treasurer, DPW Forman and Chief of Police

3) Pass new Policies and Procedures

Responsible Party- Village Manager and Village Council

Objective #2

Assure that we present all aspects of Village facilities and property in the most professional manner possible

Action Steps

1) Inspect and report to supervisor any facilities and property professional shortfalls

Responsible Party- All Village Employees

2) Put together proposed investments to improve the professionalism of the Village of Decatur's facilities and vehicles and propose them to Council

Responsible Party- Department Heads and Village Manager

3) Approval and implementation of proposals

Responsible Party- Village Council, Village Manager and Department Heads

Issue #4

Employment Compensation is currently not at a level to prevent future turnover.

Why: The Village employees are a great strength to The Village of Decatur. To be assure that we can avoid turnover, compensatory packages should be improved to retain our current employees and if needed, attract the best possible applicants as replacements.

Goal

Increase the compensation package to limit turnover of all positions.

Objective #1

Assess where the Village of Decatur's compensatory package stands with similar municipalities.

Action Steps

1) Research and document what the Village of Decatur compensatory package entails including salary, healthcare, life insurance, retirement savings account, sick/personal time off and vacation time off.

Responsible Party- Village Clerk/Treasurer and Village Manager

2) Research and document what similar sized communities that offer similar services offer as a compensatory package including salary, healthcare, life insurance, retirement savings account, sick/personal time off and vacation time off.

Responsible Party- Village Manager

Objective #2

Implement improvements to the compensatory package that the Village of Decatur offers to make it competitive with similar communities.

Action Steps

1) Create a compensatory package that is fair and equal to similar communities

Responsible Party- Department Heads and Village Manager

2) Propose and implement changes

Responsible Party- Village Manager and Village Council