

Village of Vicksburg

2013

Strategic Planning Initiative

(July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014)

August 1, 2013

Prepared By:

Prizm Solutions, Portage, MI 49024, 269-352-4583

'Accelerate Transformation in your Organization'

THE PROCESS

The Vicksburg Village Council and staff met in June and July of 2013 to discuss and make decisions for the Village's future growth and direction. The Council identified the realities of the present and the visions for tomorrow as they mapped out a course for the future. The strategic planning team included the following participants:

- Bill Adams, Village President
- Colin Bailey, Village Council Member
- Jeff Becker, Village Council Member
- Marc Boyer, Village Council Member
- Kyle Dury, Village Council Member
- Ronald Smith, Village Council Member
- Chris Newman, Village Council Member
- Richard Dykstra, Village Treasurer
- Tracy Locey, Village Clerk/Office Manager
- Jeff Rohrstaff, Director of Golf Operations
- Ken Schippers, DPW Director
- Eric West, Public Safety Director

The strategic planning session was conducted over four half day sessions and included identification of the long term Vision statement (5-10 years); SWOT analysis review; determination of new strategies and tactics for 2013; and a five-year roadmap. The components of the strategy were defined as follows:

Vision Statement: A clear picture of what an organization is striving to become, and pointed toward the future. The best are tightly defined and energize the organization.

Strategies: How an organization will apply its resources to carry out its mission and pursue its vision. Strategies "lead the organization" and are sometimes called goals or objectives.

Tactics: Define specific action steps that have been selected to achieve the strategies.

This document was developed after Visioning sessions were conducted with the public, staff and council members. The findings from these meetings are attached in the appendix. The strategic planning meetings included review and analysis of present environments, threats and opportunities. The strategies and tactics were established to drive the Council's efforts to enhance the Village's growth in the years ahead. They identified challenges the Village is facing and then developed strategies to create a plan for success over the next five years. Some of the main topics that the Village residents suggested as part of the effort going forward included:

- "Stay as a historic village that promotes its natural assets and work with the people and surrounding communities to build economically sound and ethically sound community that is more supportive of elderly and teenagers."
- "A thriving business and industrial community which provides activities, top quality education and care for all generations, while being a much sought after southwestern Michigan destination."
- "Become a self-sustaining community that supports all age groups, satisfying the wants and needs of the community."
- "Vicksburg is a historical place with sufficient growth while keeping the small town atmosphere focusing on people, businesses, and the economy."
- "Create an environment that provides all citizens with the best services balanced with reasonable taxes that encourage economic growth while maintaining a Hometown feel."
- "Working together to make Vicksburg your **Hometown for Life** for all ages to live and as a destination."
- "A proactive intergenerational community that provides educational, health and economic opportunities through fiscal responsibility, while keeping our small town feel."

When creating the Vision statement, the Council members developed some core ideas to help focus their thinking for future initiatives and growth based on the findings from the public Vision meetings. These ideas helped to form the Vision statement and included:

- Community known for its small town atmosphere with advanced technology.
- Clean, orderly, business friendly in a growing community.
- Green, growing, caring, and forward thinking community that attracts and retains great businesses, people and visitors.
- Livable community with fiscal solvency that promotes business diversity, stable community, safety, and quality parks.
- Provide a diverse modern community.
- Small town feel with opportunities of a major metro area.

Each Council member also developed a statement based on the findings of the public and staff Vision sessions to help further guide the development of a community Vision:

“Become a historic, growing community where generations come to shop, work, live and enjoy its many recreational opportunities”.

“A Village that embraces and encourages growth for the future by providing a unique place to raise a family, conducts business, or just stay awhile.”

“Provide a diverse historic atmosphere with unique recreation and the desire to grow using technology.”

“Vicksburg will be a destination for families to enjoy our recreational resources and embrace the crossroads of a small town and 21st century technology.”

“Become a green, growing, with historic small town atmosphere for all ages embracing technology diverse growth and recreation.”

“A livable, technologically advanced small town community with opportunities for personal and commercial growth.”

“Vicksburg will have a diverse small town atmosphere for all generations that embraces and facilitates growth with great public services and recreational areas.”

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

The Village of Vicksburg . . . where we embrace recreation, technology and business in a growing historic community.

SWOT ANALYSIS

The Council members conducted a SWOT analysis, which focused on internal Strengths and Weaknesses and external Opportunities and Threats. The SWOT was developed using the vision sessions conducted with the Village Council, Village Staff and Community findings. The discussion from this analysis was used as the foundation for the Strategic Plan and resulted in the findings listed below:

STRENGTHS

- Village Council (Diverse skillsets; commitment to make things better; community sensitivity; educated; generous of time, honesty and integrity; team oriented; visionary)
- Sunset Lake
- Brownfield revenue sites
- South County newspaper
- Schools, educated community
- Support resources including library, foundation, hospital
- Many service groups
- Land for expansion
- Diverse recreational resources (golf course, lakes, streams, paths, fishing, boating)
- Proximity to major metro areas
- Established community with lots of history
- Safe community
- Historic Village
- Farmers Market
- Basic services (bank, grocery, legal, insurance, restaurants, retail, services)
- Events and festivals
- Village owned sewer and water
- Industrial park
- Water supply and quality

WEAKNESSES (Struggles)

- New Council (not a lot of past history)
- Communications in the community
- Lack of grant writing expertise
- Lack of funding for projects/programs
- Bad publicity
- Business development and growth
- High taxes and water bills
- Diminishing healthcare services
- Lack of knowledge on inventory for rental and senior housing
- Lack of lodging (B&B, hotels, motels)
- Redevelopment of Mill and surrounding property
- Traffic flow and parking
- Rising costs for water treatment
- Aging infrastructure (lift stations, DPW equipment, sidewalks, water/sewer lines)
- Rules and regulations for decision making to mitigate conflicts

OPPORTUNITIES

- Streamline Village functions, consolidations, and other cost cutting efforts
- AVB development of additional high quality housing
- Expansion of golf course and bike paths
- Purchase of 88 acres west of Mill for housing or business
- Village reputation “Under New Management”
- Promote accountability
- Conduct proper planning for growth
- Enhance Village communications, promote transparency and implement goals
- Attract new businesses
- Attract new residents
- Enhance intergovernmental cooperation
- Obtain funding for redevelopment of Old Mill
- Re-purpose hospital facility
- Combine township/village offices to reduce costs
- Combine EMS, fire and police community services
- Incorporate new technology into business, events, residents
- Potential revenue from Vicksburg police servicing the township
- Offer incentives to redevelop downtown buildings (i.e., Foundation grants)
- Development along “V” Avenue

- Attract middle class housing development
- Develop the environmental area into a recreational space
- Create a transportation center for schools and other Village vehicles
- Clean-up Sunset Lake
- Designate downtown as a historic area
- Sell unused property owned by the Village

THREATS

- Lack of a back-up water well
- On-going litigation
- Hazardous waste/environments (i.e., Old Mill)
- Aging infrastructure and DPW equipment
- Downtown fire
- Revenue sharing
- Funds for storm and disaster clean-up
- Low cash reserves for emergencies
- Succession planning for Village departments
- No DPW equipment replacement plan

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

The following strategic initiatives were developed by the Council members as needs for the community based on the findings from the public, staff, and Council vision sessions. The Vision statement and SWOT analysis were also used to guide their development. The Council members were each given votes to prioritize the strategies. If no votes were given, it means it is not a priority for the upcoming year, but it is still viewed as a future priority for the Village and will be included on a five-year development roadmap.

For each of the top five strategies, an outline of the tactics (or action steps) needed to implement each strategy was developed. These tactics could include activities the Village should discontinue as well as new efforts to initiate. A person will be assigned to coordinate and be responsible for the successful completion of each of the top five strategies.

STRATEGY	VOTES	STRAT
Obtain maximum funding for all projects (water, infrastructure, DPW equipment)	7	1
Have the most advanced communications technology (business, residents, events)	5	2
Redevelop the Old Mill and surrounding property	4	3
Develop a business plan for the golf course	4	4
Identify opportunities for youth and developing technology/STEM programs (volunteer coordinator, create awareness of opportunities)	4	5
Create strong partnership with the hospital (offsetting costs)	3	2014
Review of all ordinances and policies to assist in the resolution of conflicts	3	2014
Grow tax base by 50% (housing and businesses)	3	1
Create programs to attract and retain businesses	2	2016
Prepare a Parks and Recreation Master Plan (including trail system and Sunset Lake)	2	2014
Consolidating services analysis (intergovernmental, transportation center)	2	2014
Explore opportunities to develop senior housing (possible partnership with hospital)	1	2015
Develop inventory of area rental housing and rental guidelines	1	2014
Identify need for lodging for golf course, events, and the types needed	1	4
Create positive revenue streams (i.e. water/sewer fund for projects-well, lift station)	1	1
Establish minimum fund balances/% (i.e., by fund for DPW and other areas)	1	2017
Enhance public communications between Village and residents (newspaper, web)	0	2
Enhance positive perception of Vicksburg (i.e., PR, marketing, spokesperson)	0	2015
Raise awareness of parking availability	0	2015
Investigate historic village designation	0	2017
Enhance proper processes for Council and Legal review for purchase contracts	0	Done
Update fire alarm and/or suppression systems in downtown buildings	0	2015
Enhance performance review process and succession planning for Village staff	0	Done
Identify major events to create awareness for Vicksburg (signature event)	0	2017

The top five strategies were selected for the first year and tactics were developed for each as shown below. Responsibilities were also assigned for each activity to guide its completion. The remaining strategies are considered important and placed on a 5-year business roadmap for future development.

STRATEGIES – CHAMPION: Bill Adams

1. PROJECT FUNDING

Goal: *Obtain maximum funding for all projects (water, infrastructure, DPW equipment)*
(Bill 4/1/14)

- a. Refinance all debt including \$1.4M Land Contract @ 6%, \$1.6M Bonds @5.875% and identify opportunities for charitable giving. (Bill 12/31/13)
- b. Create a spreadsheet of municipal funding grant writers including contact information and area of expertise. (Tracy 12/31/13)
- c. Create a list of prioritized projects for funding by department and develop a tool for tracking fund usage. (Jeff B. 10/31/13)
- d. List for sale all unutilized real estate to divest assets to increase tax base. (Ken 8/31/13)
- e. Create a strategy to increase tax base by a predetermined percentage through use of Brownfield funds and real estate taxes. (Ken 11/1/13)
- f. Establish an invoicing policy for all Village services, and create a process for receivables and payment tracking procedures including those for events and water connection charges. (Tracy 1/31/14)
- g. Collaborate with state and county for funding opportunities including MEDC and Southwest Michigan First. (Bill 2/1/14)
- h. Investigate cost cutting opportunities and prepare a cost analysis. (Marc 1/1/14)
- i. Prepare and communicate a list of incentive programs for sidewalks and downtown maintenance and renovations. (Marc 4/1/14)

2. INTEGRATE ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Goal: To create an advanced communication infrastructure for the Village to attract technology businesses and workers. (Colin 3/31/14)

- a. Prepare an analysis of enhancing the Village infrastructure with fiber optics for business areas including the need for dual redundancy. (Colin 9/30/13)
- b. Develop a plan to provide free high speed internet availability for Village residents and businesses. (Colin 12/31/13)
- c. Develop a cost analysis to enhance communications with Village residents using more advanced technologies including those for email, text, phone and website features including payment options, and determine parameters/topics for alerts. (Colin 3/31/14)
- d. Form an advanced communications task force to analyze technology opportunities. (Colin 7/31/13)
- e. Add the final Strategic Plan and a dashboard to track activity completion to the Village website. (Colin 9/1/13)

3. OLD MILL REDEVELOPMENT

Goal: Redevelop the Old Mill and the surrounding property to increase the tax base and encourage the development of technology jobs. (Chris 6/30/14)

- a. Settle pending lawsuit on Old Mill property. (Bill 12/31/13)
- b. Prepare a feasibility assessment for the acquisition of property adjacent to the Mill. (Ken 12/31/13)
- c. Conduct TAB Visioning Session and create a development plan. (Chris 5/1/14)
- d. Identify resources to obtain \$3M in funding for property clean-up. (Chris 6/30/14)
- e. Raise \$100,000 for purchase of property on west side of Mill. (Bill 12/31/13)
- f. Determine roles and responsibilities for Brownfield Development Committee. (Chris 10/31/13)

4. ANGELS CROSSING GOLF COURSE BUSINESS PLAN

Goal: *Develop a business plan for the golf course to maximize revenues and create a development roadmap for the property (Kyle 2/28/14)*

- a. Prepare an assessment for the addition of nine holes and a restaurant. (Jeff R. 2/15/14)
- b. Identify funding for \$250,000 AVB housing development and \$100,000 parking lot construction. (Bill 12/31/13)
- c. Develop plan to repay Village for unrestricted debt. (Tracy 7/31/13)
- d. Evaluate expenditure and revenue approval process and review. (Tracy 7/31/13)
- e. Establish fiscal oversight review process and outline procedures. (Tracy 7/31/13)
- f. Identify a consultant to develop a business plan. (Kyle 12/31/13)
- g. Develop a business plan for the golf course facilities. (Jeff R. 2/28/14)

5. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

Goal: *Identify recreation and educational opportunities for youth including a focus on encouraging the development of technology skillsets. (Ken 6/30/14)*

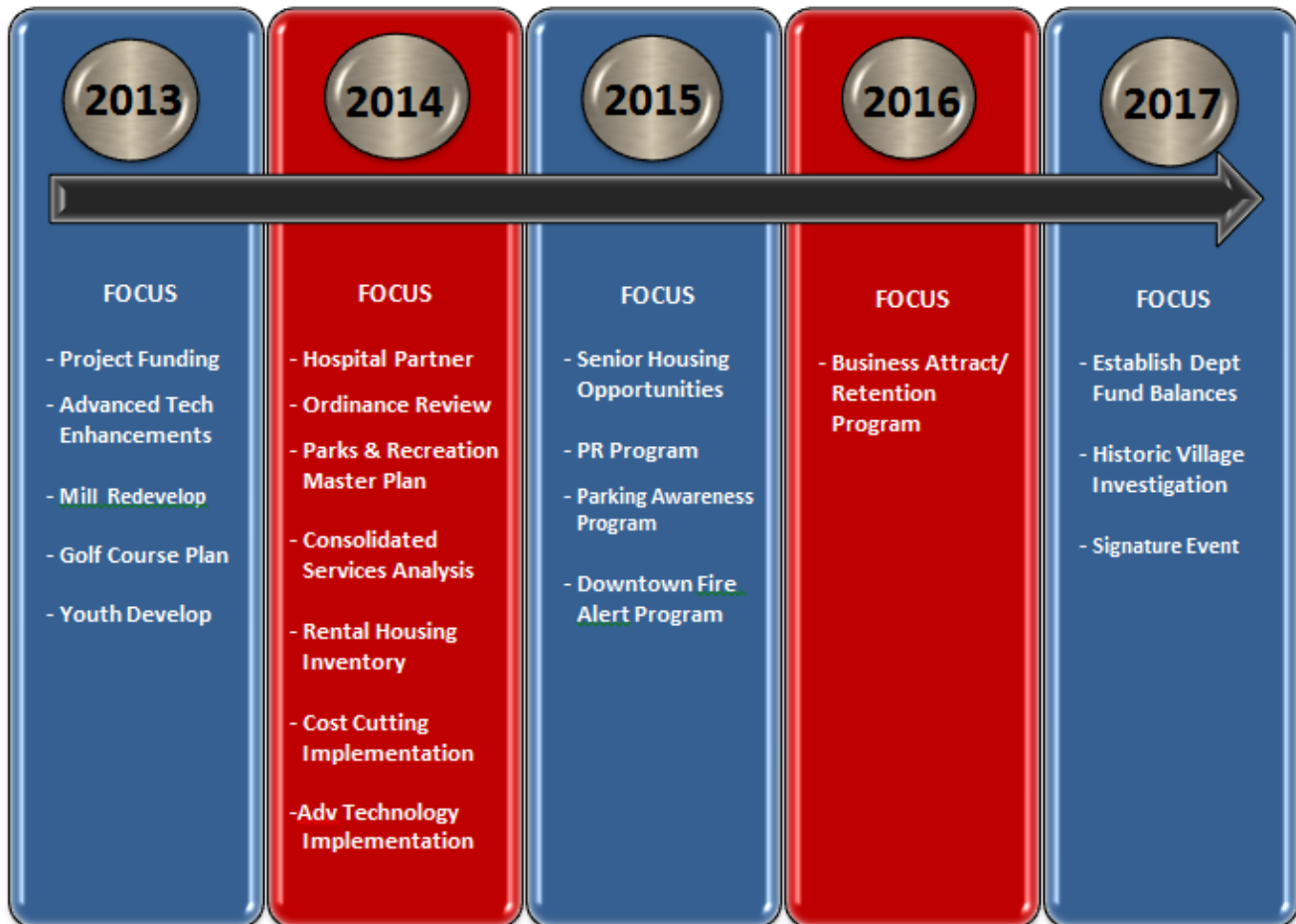
- a. Identify the current state of existing Village programs. (Ken 4/1/14)
- b. Benchmark other community offerings for youth including STEM programs. (Ken 4/1/14)
- c. Prepare a gap analysis comparing the current state with the benchmarking results and community needs assessment to identify opportunities. (Ken 5/1/14)
- d. Develop a plan and funding needs for programs. (Ken 6/30/14)
- e. Create a communication plan to create awareness of programs including usage of the digital board, website and other tools. (Ken 6/30/14)

TIMELINE/ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

STRATEGY	PERSON	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE
1. PROJECT FUNDING	Bill												
- Refinance Debt	Bill												
- Grant Writers List	Tracy												
- Prioritized Projects	Jeff B.												
- List Real Estate to Divest	Ken												
- Tax Base Strategy	Ken												
- Invoicing Policy	Tracy												
- State & County Collaboration	Bill												
- Cost Cutting Opps	Marc												
- Incentive Programs	Marc												
2. ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY	Colin												
- Fiber Optic Analysis	Colin												
- High Speed Internet Analysis	Colin												
- Village Communications	Colin												
- Task Force	Colin												
- Statagic Plan on Website	Colin												
3. MILL REDEVELOPMENT	Chris												
- Settle lawsuit	Bill												
- Acquisition Feasibility	Ken												
- TAB Session	Chris												
- \$3M Property Clean-up	Chris												
- Raise \$100,000 for Purchase	Bill												
- Brownfield Dev Committee	Chris												
4. GOLF COURSE PLAN	Kyle												
- Facility Expansion Assess	Jeff R.												
- AVB/Parking Lot Funding	Bill												
- Unrestricted Debt Payment	Tracy												
- Expenditure Process	Tracy												
- Fiscal Oversight Procedures	Tracy												
- Identify Consultant	Kyle												
- Golf Course Business Plan	Jeff R.												
5. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT	Ken												
- ID Village Programs	Ken												
- Community Benchmarking	Ken												
- Gap Analysis	Ken												
- Develop Funding Plan	Ken												
- Communication Plan	Ken												

FIVE-YEAR ROADMAP

Strategies were placed on a five-year development roadmap as shown below to plan for growth in the Village of Vicksburg. Each year represents the annual fiscal period which runs from July 1 through June 30.



APPENDIX A – Community Vision Session Top Findings from 4/24/13

COMPILED FINDINGS FROM ALL SEVEN GROUPS

1. VISION STATEMENTS FROM EACH GROUP

“Stay as a historic village that promotes its natural assets and work with the people and surrounding communities to build economically sound and ethically sound community that is more supportive of elderly and teenagers.”

“A thriving business and industrial community which provides activities, top quality education and care for all generations, while being a much sought after southwestern Michigan destination.”

“Become a self-sustaining community that supports all age groups, satisfying the wants and needs of the community.”

“Vicksburg is a historical place with sufficient growth while keeping the small town atmosphere focusing on people, businesses, and the economy.”

“Create an environment that provides all citizens with the best services balanced with reasonable taxes that encourage economic growth while maintaining a Hometown feel.”

“Working together to make Vicksburg your **Hometown for Life** for all ages to live and as a destination.”

“A proactive intergenerational community that provides educational, health and economic opportunities through fiscal responsibility, while keeping our small town feel.”

Total Mentions are the number of groups that reported this area as one of their top two findings for a total of 14 mentions.

2. COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Strengths	Total Mentions
Quality of Schools	5 groups
Civic Pride, Friendly Atmosphere	2 groups
Historic Village Atmosphere	2 groups
Location as a Small Town	1 group
Community Events (<i>quality and quantity</i>)	1 group
Hospital – Urgent Care Services	1 group
Village Public Works	1 group
Downtown Area (<i>landscaping, décor, cleanliness</i>)	1 group

3. COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Mentions
Property Tax Rates Too High	3 groups
Retaining Current Business and Recruiting New Diverse Businesses	2 groups
Lack of Recreation Facilities for Teens (<i>i.e., skateboard parks, basketball, after school</i>)	2 groups
Not Enough Parking Downtown	1 group
Developing/Cleaning up Old Mill Property	1 group
Lack of Communication with Village (<i>want more information</i>)	1 group
Support for Small Business (<i>tax breaks, incentives to meet small business needs</i>)	1 group
Lack of Follow Through on Master Plan	1 group
Unfriendly Police Department (<i>selects what they will enforce and/or lack of priorities</i>)	1 group
Promote Local Residents to Use Local Businesses	1 group

4. COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities
Centralize services with area government such as changing Fire into Safety Department; share water services; and explore opportunities for increased economic savings.
Hire a professional grant writer for the Village to obtain funding for area projects.
Repurpose the Bronson facility for elderly care so people can “age in place in Vicksburg”.
Develop the Old Mill and grounds (motel, hotel, business incubator focusing on a specific industry).
Organize a major golf tournament as a championship/mini pro tour.
Develop lifetime wellness with local healthcare and recreation options from youth to senior.
Create a pedestrian “Beauty Walk” linking parts of the Village such as “Follow the Yellow Brick Road”
Develop a community center with a multi-generational place for youth activities and senior services.
Promote community activities with small businesses such as a unified small business day or Shop Local Day.
Build a multi-use sized pavilion in the recreation area for outdoor activities with concessions.
Develop lodging in town for events to keep people in town.
Clean-up Sunset Lake and develop into a family area (<i>trash removal, more sand for a beach, add kid’s activities</i>)
Develop a recreation trail with tie-in of trail north of town to connect with golf course area at creek.
Increase use of newspaper to enhance communications.
Develop housing for seniors.
Develop website to communicate to the residents.

GROUP FINDINGS:

Each participant added their two top ideas to the group list. In many cases there were fewer ideas listed since group members identified the same area. Each participant was given a number of votes to cast to assist in prioritizing their group list. The number of votes given to each group was reduced when the list was smaller but would range from two to four votes throughout the session. The two top prioritized items were then reported in the overall findings above.

All effort was made to keep the group sizes no larger than 8 participants; however some participants came late or left early so the number of vote tallies for each group may fluctuate, but the voting was used only to obtain a consensus within the group of its top two findings to report out.

Group 1**COMMUNITY STRENGTHS**

Strengths	Total Votes
School System	6
Civic Pride	3
Police (Public Safety)	2
Location "Creek"	1

COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Votes
Develop Old Mill Property	4
Lower Property Tax Rates to Encourage Growth	4
Mill Clean Up and Establish Growth Path	4
Senior Citizen Housing Development	4
Focus on Growing Downtown	2
Street Maintenance	2
Increase Employment	1
Clean Up Creek and Provide Public Access	1
Responsible Leadership	0
Grow Golf Course Business	0

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities	Total Votes
Create a recreation trail and connect downtown to golf course	3
Create a community forum/newspaper	3
Memorial Day festivities with a parade (need more town vibrancy)	2
Recruitment of Businesses	2
Develop senior housing	1
Develop Sprinkle to Silver direct	1
Workforce Development	0

Group 2**COMMUNITY STRENGTHS**

Strengths	Total Votes
Downtown Area	8
Good Education	7
Safe Community	5
Good Community Activities	3
Angels Crossing Golf Course	2
Police Department	2
Chamber of Commerce	1
Sense of Community	1
New Residential Areas	1
Manufacturing Facilities	0

COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Votes
Parking Downtown	8
Lower Taxes	7
Visitor Information Center	5
Teens/Tween Activities	4
Taxes Don't Draw Businesses	3
Empty Store Fronts	2
Keeping Lakes/Beached Clean	2
Town Exposure	1
Deal with Blight Properties Quickly	0

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities	Total Votes
Develop Hotels/Lodging	8
Clean Up Lake to Bring in Visitors	7
Directional Signage on Highway 131	5
Building for Visitor Center	3
Advertise as a Destination on Web and Social Media	1
Teen/Tween Activities	1
Host National Events	1
Attract Brewer/Restaurant	1
Develop Fox River Plant as a Destination	1
Implement Business Mixers to Inform Each Other	1

Group 3**COMMUNITY STRENGTHS**

Strengths	Total Votes
Local Medical Facility	5
Public Works/Public Safety	4
Lakes and Streams	4
Good Leadership	3
People Want to Get Involved	2
Real Community Spirit (churches, service clubs, volunteers)	2
Full Service Community Water, Police	1
A Real Downtown	1
Small Town Quaint Feeling	1
Unique Downtown for Tourism	1
Historic Village	1
Communicating Via Paper, Meetings	0
Variety of Businesses	0

COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Votes
Economic Appeal to Recruit New Business and Retention	6
Village Taxes Too High	5
Old Mill	4
Business Sustainability	3
No Motels Nearby	3
Downtown Parking	2
Parking for Special Events at Market/Village	2
Better Communication with Non-residents	1
Getting Village to Spend Money	1
Larger Population	0
Off The Beaten Path	0
Poor Quality Restaurants	0
Limited Parks and Recreation Program	0
Gathering Spot	0

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities	Total Votes
Develop the Old Mill and Grounds	4
Organize Major Golf Tournament	3
Bring BTB Fest Back Into Town	2
Recruit Small Businesses to Support Larger Businesses with Local Low Cost Industrial Use Land	2
Make VXB Available to Attract (Stryker)	2
Need Hotel/Motel	1
Expand Community Events for all Ages	1
Build a Splash Park for Youngsters	1

Group 4**COMMUNITY STRENGTHS**

Strengths	Total Votes
Good Schools	6
Charming Historic Village	4
Supportive, Friendly Community	4
Wanting to Grow	3
Small Size Village	3
News Businesses	2
Clean Water Resources	2
Smart People	1
Village Wide Communications	1

COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Votes
Lack of Communications	5
Lack of Recreation for Teenagers	5
Lack of Assisted Living for Seniors	4
Shoddy Construction/Rapid Building (no thought)	4
Priorities of Law Enforcement	2
Building Preservation for Downtown	1
No Nature Conservancy/Protection of Nature	1

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities	Total Votes
Grant Writer	4
Repurpose Bronson Hospital to Assisted Living Nursing Home	4
Mill Economic Zone	3
Utilize Village Owned Property	2
Move R&D to Krum Building	1
Public Restrooms in Town Historic Village	1
Fix Mill	0
Jobs for Teens	0
Sunset Lake Park	0
Expanding Nature Trails	0
Spook House Halloween Fundraiser	0
Bike Day	0

Group 5

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Strengths	Total Rank
School System	1
Long History of Community Support/Civic Pride	2
Historic Homes	0
Good Downtown	0
People Dedicated to the Community	0

Note: Instead of voting this group made a team consensus of what they felt were most important for community strengths and ranked them as number one and two.

COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Votes
Difficulty in Supporting Small Business	5
Recreation Opportunities for Young People	5
Sidewalks Downtown	4
Cleaner Downtown, Streets, Village	4
Lack of a Newspaper for Community Communications	2
Aging People Move and Lose Community History	2
Attracting and Retaining Business	2
Lack of Hotel	1
Keeping Public Informed	1
Vandalism	0
Curfews Not Enforced	0
No Sporting Goods Shop	0
Lack of Funds for Business Support	0

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities	Total Votes
Beautify Pedestrian Walkways Connecting to Downtown	6
Lifetime Wellness Center Based at New Hospital (physical, recreation, social and mental)	5
Mutual Support (time) Bank	4
Publish Vicksburg Activities (radio, Facebook)	3
Coordination of Groups for Planning Events to Put Vicksburg on the Map	2
Update Public Beach Area and Maintain Trails	1
Plant Shade Trees for Future Generations and Add a Public Swimming Pool	1
Make Mill Into a Hotel	1
Utilize the Lake Area (ice fishing, skating, softball fields)	0
Encourage a Cleaner Downtown and Sweep Sidewalks Outside Shops	0

Group 6

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Strengths	Total Votes
Historic Village	7
Location as Small Town	6
Educational System	4
Famers Market	3
Recreation Parks	3
Waterways	2
Public Works	2
Generosity	1
Social Resources	1
Volunteers	1
Library	1
Performing Arts	1
Clean	0

COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Votes
Lack of Follow Through	7
Police Dept	6
Cronyism	5
Lack of Transparency	5
Poor Communication	3
Misuse of Resources	3
Isolationism	1
Lack of Consistency	1
Loss of Jobs	1
Lack of Small Business Support	1
Poor Public Perception	0
Lack of Professionalism	0

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities	Total Votes
Community Service Center with Youth Center	8
Pavilion Shelter at Recreation Area with Restrooms and Concessions	8
Promote Community Activities with Small Business (obtaining a grant writer to fund)	7
Extend Trail ways	4
Low Cost Housing	4
Waterways	1
Technology/Trade Schools	1
Pavilion in Historic Village	0
Job Opportunities (adult and youth)	0
Intergenerational Activities	0
Concessions	0

Group 7

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Strengths	Total Votes
Community Events	5
Schools	5
Lakes/Water/Parks & Recreation	4
Sewer and Water Services	4
People/Vision	3
No Major Highways	0

COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Votes
Lack of Utilization of Local Services	4
Business Growth & Diversity of Services	4
Housing/Population Increase	3
Lack of Local Communications	3
Too Many Police Officers	1
Showing the Populace What the Taxes Pay For	1
Not Enough Quality Restaurants	1
High Taxes	0

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

[illegible]

Note: Instead of voting this group made a team consensus of what they felt was most important for community opportunities and ranked them as number one and two.

APPENDIX B – Village Staff Vision Session Findings (5/15/13)

COMPILED FINDINGS FROM ALL THREE GROUPS

Total Mentions are the number of groups that reported this area as one of their top three findings for a total of 9 mentions.

1. VISION

“A thriving, growing city with a small hometown feel, to live, work and shop without the need to leave.”

“Vicksburg, a small town feel with big opportunities to live, work and play.”

“A clean and peaceful village with opportunities for young and old to shop, play and live.”

2. COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Strengths	Total Mentions
Schools and education	3 groups
Department of Public Works	2 groups
Small town events	1 group
Golf Course	1 group
Law Enforcement	1 group
Community Support/Volunteerism	1 group

3. COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Mentions
Community vs. Police Dept. <i>(people making assumptions regarding police without the facts and then are supported by Council)</i>	1 group
Difficult to park in front of stores and blind spots pulling out of areas.	1 group
Roads and sidewalks need repair	1 group
Council overstepping boundaries <i>(ex: where to place radar, ignoring contract)</i>	1 group
Lack of support from previous Village Council	1 group
Lack of options for young people <i>(things to do, places to go, instead of vandalism)</i>	1 group
Lack of support for law enforcement	1 group
Community communications	1 group
Diversity of small businesses	1 group

4. COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities	Total Mentions
Utilize paper mill into micro-brewery, casino, sports complex, community college, movie theatre	2 groups
More retail including a grocery and fast food to compete with the need to go to other communities.	2 groups
Grow more businesses in downtown area	1 group
Merging police and fire into a public safety department.	1 group
Develop more recreational areas for family and kids	1 group
Diversify industry away from plastics and increase manufacturing in growth industries.	1 group
Apply for more grants to fund ideas by hiring a Village grant writer.	1 group

GROUP FINDINGS:

Each participant added their two top ideas to the group list. In many cases there were fewer ideas listed since group members identified the same area. Each participant was given a number of votes to cast to assist in prioritizing their group list. The number of votes given to each group was reduced when the list was smaller but would range from two to four votes throughout the session. The two top prioritized items were then reported in the overall findings above.

All effort was made to keep the group sizes no larger than 8 participants; however some participants came late or left early so the number of vote tallies for each group may fluctuate, but the voting was used only to obtain a consensus within the group of its top two findings to report out.

Group 1**COMMUNITY STRENGTHS**

Strengths	Total Rank
Law Enforcement	1
Dept of Public Works	2
School System	3
SKCFA	
SCEMS	
Parks & Recreation (Golf)	

Note: Instead of voting this group made a team consensus of what they felt was most important for community strengths and ranked them as number one and two.

COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Votes
Council Overstepping Boundaries	5
Lack of Support from Previous Village Council	4
Lack of Support for Law Enforcement	3
Lack of Industry	3
Deteriorating Village Buildings	2
Lack of Lighting for Street Lights/Energy Efficiency	1
Drugs	0
Drug Treatment	0
Police Department Needs New Buildings and Garage	0
Police Department Needs to be Staffed Fully According to Contract	0

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities	Total Votes
Use of Paper Mill (community college, microbrewery, sports complex, casino)	6
More Retail (grocery, stores to compete Portage, theatre)	6
Diversify Plastics Industry	4
Renewable/Alternative Energy	2
Public Transit (bus)	0
Expand Bronson Vicksburg Hospital (ER)	0

Group 2

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Strengths	Total Votes
Schools/Education	5
Small Town Events	5
Golf Course	4
Vicksburg Foundation	3
Value of Quality of Life	2
Street Plowing	2
Small Town Feel	1
Chamber of Commerce	1

COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Votes
Community Versus Police Department	5
Roads/Sidewalks	4
Parking	4
Communications	3
Business Development/Sustainability	2
Public Safety	2
Need Restaurants	2
Aesthetics	1
Lack of Fire Fighters	1
Media Attention	1
Politics	0

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities	Total Votes
South County Public Safety (merge police, fire, ambulance)	3
Business Growth in Downtown Village	3
Expand Recreational Events (youth ideas to keep them busy)	3
Partner with Other Government Entities (share costs and services)	3
Trail way (connect Portage and Schoolcraft to Vicksburg)	2
AVB Growth (tax base/support business)	2
Expand Industrial Business	2
Old Mill Redevelopment	2

Group 3**COMMUNITY STRENGTHS**

Strengths	Total Votes
Public Works	5
School System	4
Community Support	3
Golf Course	2
Location	2
Parks	2
Historic Village	1
Police Department	1

COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Struggles	Total Votes
Lack of Options for Young People	5
Inability to Attract New Business	5
Communications	3
Small Business Options	3
Downtown Parking (lack of and difficulty)	2
Consistency	1
Unwillingness to Accept Change	0

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities	Total Votes
Old Paper Mill Redevelopment	5
Retail Shop (more options)	4
Apply for More Grants (fund new projects)	4
Fast Food Options	4
Bowling Alley/Putt Putt Golf (activities for youth)	1
Recreation Parks & Golf Course (more advertising)	1
Provide More Open Lines of Communications for DDA	1
Beach Area (clean up lake)	0