



VICKSBURG

Downtown Development Authority

2014

Strategic Planning Initiative

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Prepared By:

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'Accelerate Transformation in your Organization'

THE PROCESS

A ten member strategic planning team consisting of participants from the DDA Board, Village of Vicksburg, and Vicksburg community businesses, and met in March and April 2014 to discuss and make decisions for the Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority's (DDA) future growth and direction. The Team identified the realities of the present and the visions for tomorrow as they mapped out a course for the future. This strategic planning team included the following participants:

- Bill Adams, Village of Vicksburg
- Tanya DeLong, DDA Board Member
- Laura Howard, DDA Board Member
- Tracy Locey, Village of Vicksburg
- Mary Marshall, Kalamazoo County State Bank
- Steve McCowen, DDA Board Member
- Amy Miller, DDA Board Member
- Mike Oswalt, DDA Board Member
- Clint Powell, DDA Board Member
- Ken Schippers, Village of Vicksburg

The strategic planning session was conducted over six, two-hour sessions and included identification of the long term Vision statement (5-10 years); an updated Mission statement; SWOT analysis review; determination of new strategies and tactics for 2014; and a three-year roadmap for implementation. The components of the strategy were defined as:

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.

Mission Statement: Defines the focus and purpose of the organization; what it does, for whom, and why. It should provide clarity about characteristics and values.

Strategies: Define 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.

The following document was developed after a Community Vision session was conducted on Friday, March 21 which asked participants in three groups their ideas of a downtown vision, strengths, struggles and opportunities which are show below.

1. VISION STATEMENTS FROM EACH GROUP

- Vicksburg... pride in our historical heritage; variety of shops and services; family oriented community; pedestrian friendly; great landscaping; fine dining; variety of activities to promote quality of life.
- The Vicksburg DDA is committed to promoting economic, outdoor and historical development while offering enjoyable shopping, dining, entertainment, and lodging experiences for visitors, while providing convenience and a small town atmosphere to local residents.
- A welcoming downtown that incorporates our historic past, beautiful natural amenities, with plenty of entertainment, and dining options, with a commitment to promote economic development potential.

2. COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Total Mentions are the number of groups (from three total groups representing approximately 24 participants) that reported this area as one of their top two findings for a total of 14 mentions.

STRENGTH	TOTAL MENTIONS
Historical Area/Buildings	3 groups
Schools	3 groups
Destination Place to Shop	1 groups
Community Involvement	2 groups
Beauty of Nearby Lakes & Streams	2 groups
Good Mix of Goods and Services/Shops	2 groups
Public Services ; DPW, Police, Fire	2 groups
Quaint Downtown	1 group
Unique Stores	1 group
Civic Activities	1 group
Variety of Services Available	1 group
Community Center Services	1 group
Layout/Buildings & Parking	1 group
Street Scape	1 group
Historic Village	1 group
Welcoming Community	1 group
Chamber of Commerce	1 group
Car Show (Great Tourist Area)	1 group
Good Gathering Place for Central Activities	1 group
Word of Mouth	1 group
Support From Other Businesses	1 group

3. COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

STRUGGLES	TOTAL MENTIONS
Maintenance of Buildings	2 groups
Fill Stores with Tenants	1 group
Lack of Youth Activities	1 group
Industry	1 group
Better Looking Signs & Visibility	1 group
Negative Public Perception of Local Leadership	1 group
Lack of Entertainment for Different Age Groups	1 group
Disjointed Communication Between Organizations	1 group
Some Areas Need Cleanup	1 group
Right Mix of Businesses	1 group
Park Beautification	1 group
Growth/Attracting Businesses	1 group
Abandoned Areas	1 group
Safety	1 group
Safe, Affordable, Child Friendly Housing	1 group
Parking	1 group
Employment in Industries/Job Opportunities	1 group
Taking Pride in Schools (Band/Sports)	1 group
Welcoming Committee	1 group
No Signs When Entering Vicksburg (Promoting Achievements)	1 group
Financial/Grants to Redevelop Run Down Homes/Buildings	1 group
Infrastructures – Roads	1 group
Community Center That's Accessible During Winter	1 group

4. COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

OPPORTUNITIES
Community/Arts & Culture: Movie Theatre, Brewery, Sports Park, Bakery, Prof Bldg, Antiques, Bookstore, B&B
Develop Mill Property for Industry & Brew Pub
Regulate Blight & Mandatory Removal of Graffiti
Safe Places to Play for Children to Attract Young Families
More Fine Food & Drink
Connect Trail to Portage Trail
Green Spaces (trails, lakes, streams, boating, x-country skiing, now tubing, bike trails, disc golf)
Develop a Sports Complex (with water and other activities for kids)
Repurpose Community Center –Bed & Breakfast
Historical Society/Become a Historical Village (landmark, grants)
Become a Green Community
Outdoor Activities on 80 Acres by Mill (skiing, mountain biking)
Welcome/Visitor Center/Youth Community Center (recital hall, basketball, swimming pool)
Move Community Center to Hospital (barrier/access free)
Financial Incentives (repair, rehab, repurpose)
Leja Park (bringing in more businesses)

After reviewing the Community Vision session findings, the Team developed a Mission Statement, Vision and Strategies and Tactics to drive the Board’s efforts to enhance downtown growth over the next three years.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission for the Vicksburg DDA was derived from the Public Act used to create Michigan Downtown Development Authority organizations.

Public Act 197

. . . .to correct and prevent deterioration in business districts; to encourage historic preservation; to authorize the acquisition and disposal of interests in real and personal property; to authorize the creation and implementation of development plans in the districts; to promote the economic growth of the districts . . .

Mission Statement:

The Vicksburg DDA provides incentives, support, and resources which will promote economic growth, while enhancing property values, and compelling businesses and citizens to live, work and invest in the downtown district.

VISION STATEMENT

Using the statements from the Community Vision session, the Team determined some key points for the final vision which included:

- Vicksburg History
- Lake/Natural Assets
- Variety of Shops
- Lodging
- Historic Store Fronts

Vision Statement:

Downtown Vicksburg will be a premier destination which embraces our rich heritage by showcasing unique boutiques in historic storefronts, and offering dynamic dining, event and entertainment experiences along the shores of Sunset Lake.

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

The following strategic initiatives were developed by the Team members using the Vision and Mission statements to guide their development and capitalize on the organization's strengths, struggles, and opportunities derived from the Community Vision session. For each of these top strategies, an outline of the tactics (or action steps) needed to implement each strategy was developed. These tactics could include activities the organization should discontinue as well as new efforts to initiate. A person has been assigned to coordinate and be responsible for the successful completion of each of the top five strategies. All of the draft strategies are deemed important to the on-going efforts of the DDA, however they were prioritized to facilitate timing for implementation as shown below with the voting tally.

DRAFT STRATEGIES:

STRATEGY	VOTES
Develop an improvement plan to maintain current buildings, remedy blighted properties, enhance greenscapes, and green community activities.	10
Create a growth plan to eliminate vacancies, develop a unique business mix (i.e., shops, dining, professional, and residential), business support programs, and identify space for future development.	6
Develop an external marketing/communications plan including spirit contests, sponsorships, events, co-op promotions, and group packages.	4
Identify the DDA collaborative role and a process for recruiting business, incentives & support. <i>(Will the DDA take a leading role or supporting position?)</i>	4
Develop an infrastructure plan including improvements for sidewalks, crosswalks, parking, trail system, trolley and/or other connectivity ideas such as handicap access and bike/walk path connecting Historic Village, shopping, parks, and golf course.	2
Research the process and impacts of becoming a designated Historical Village.	2
Explore options for a centralized Visitor Center (contact point and welcoming kits).	1
Identify partnerships and opportunities/programs for students to develop their business skills.	0
Create an outline of sign ordinance changes and signage; welcome, directional, parking.	0

Some of the draft strategies were more tactical in nature, and were included as a tactic under one of the four strategies developed. The four strategies determined by the Team are listed below, and responsibilities were also assigned for each activity to guide its completion, including timelines. Committees were also formed to assist with certain aspects of the strategies, and to provide opportunities for additional community participation.

I. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS

Champion: Tanya DeLong

Completion: 6/1/14

Goal: Develop a downtown improvement plan to maintain current buildings, remedy blighted properties, enhance greenscapes, and green community activities.

- a. Update and communicate a Façade Improvement program. (K. Hoyle 5/1/14)
- b. Research process, impacts and benefits of becoming a designated historical area. (B. Adams 6/1/14)
- c. Identify blighted properties, discuss goals with owners, and create a list of suggested solutions. (C. Powell 5/30/14)
- d. Outline design components for bids on creating an overall downtown theme/appearance with drawings including trees, benches, planters, awnings, sidewalk cafes, and other features; and develop partnerships with the Rotary project, Chamber and Trail Committee. (T. DeLong 5/30/14)
- e. Review ordinances for maintaining buildings and present proposed changes/updates. (C. Powell 5/30/14)
- f. Prepare a list of green opportunities for the DDA area. (M. Oswald 6/01/14)

II. BUSINESS GROWTH PLAN

Champion: Amy Miller

Completion: 6/30/14

Goal: Create a growth plan to eliminate vacancies, develop a unique business mix, design business support programs, and identify space for future development.

- a. Outline a business plan development program and identify guidelines/requirements for ensuring strong new and existing businesses. (K. Hoyle 5/15/14)
- b. Identify potential areas to unify and expand the DDA boundaries to facilitate business growth opportunities. (K. Hoyle 6/30/14)
- c. Create an inventory of business and residential vacancies, land for development, and prepare property listings to communicate to the marketplace. (M. Oswald 5/15/14)
- d. Develop a list of desired business types, outline attraction incentives, and prepare a marketing strategy to actively seek prospects. (T. DeLong 6/1/14)
- e. Implement business support workshops/speakers on growth topics including areas of focus such as customer service, marketing, technology, market research among others. (K. Hoyle 5/30)
- f. Identify partnerships and opportunities/programs for students to develop their business skills. (M. Marshall 5/1/14)
- g. Review and update the list of current DDA businesses including ownership, company name, address, phone, email and type of business. (M. Marshall 6/1/14)
- h. Outline a business support forum which could be in the format of a user group or one-on-one meetings. (K. Hoyle 4/30/14)

III. MARKETING PLAN

Champion: Kathleen Hoyle
Completion: 6/1/14

Goal: Develop an external marketing/communications plan to promote downtown business collaboration, branding, and awareness of downtown Vicksburg as a place to work, live and play.

- a. Develop a list of clubs, churches and other organizations for communicating activities through their member newsletters, and arranging speaking engagements. (M. Marshall 6/1/14)
- b. Create a process for the submission of requests for event sponsorships, spirit contests, co-op advertising programs and other community support ideas. (T. DeLong 4/30/14)
- c. Create a communication plan and outline tools which could include a website, social media, and newsletter. (K. Hoyle 6/1/14)
- d. Explore options for establishing a centralized visitor center and organizational structures to provide a point of contact for DDA activities. (A. Miller 6/1/14)
- e. Present quarterly reports to the Village Council. (K. Hoyle 5/1/14)
- f. Create trip packages to promote group visits to the DDA areas. (K. Hoyle 6/1/14)
- g. Prepare a 2014 budget with line item expenses and revenue. (A. Miller 5/15/14)

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Champion: Ken Schippers
Completion: 8/1/14

Goal: Develop an infrastructure plan including improvements to accommodate mobility, connectivity and handicap accessibility.

- a. Investigate the concept of a trolley and walking/jogging path interconnecting various area of the DDA including the parks, Historic Village, Golf Course, and shopping areas, including costs. (S. Moore 8/1/14)
- b. Identify parking areas and outline maintenance issues, traffic flow, and greenscape opportunities. (K. Schippers 8/1/14)
- c. Create a proposal of sign ordinance updates, and sign enhancements including those for welcome, directional, and parking. (T. DeLong 4/30/14)
- d. Evaluate pedestrian crosswalks and sidewalks for handicap accessibility and safety, including the benefits for a stoplight at Main and Washington. (B. Adams 8/1/14)
- e. Participate in the Village efforts for high speed interconnectivity opportunities for businesses. (K. Schippers 8/1/14)

DDA COMMITTEES:

(See strategies above for specific action plans)

I. Downtown Improvement

Goal: Develop a downtown improvement plan to maintain current buildings, remedy blighted properties, enhance greenscapes, and green community activities.

II. Business Growth

Goal: Create a growth plan to eliminate vacancies, develop a unique business mix, design business support programs, and identify space for future development.

III. Marketing

Goal: Develop an external marketing/communications plan to promote downtown business collaboration, branding, and awareness of downtown Vicksburg as a place to work, live and play.

IV. Infrastructure Plan

Goal: Develop an infrastructure plan including improvements to accommodate mobility, connectivity and handicap accessibility.

TIMELINE/ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

2014 STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE

4/28/2014

STRATEGY	PERSON	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS	Tanya												
- Façade Improvement Program	Kathleen												
- Designated Historical Area	Bill												
- Blighted Properties	Clint												
- Downtown Design	Tanya												
- Building Ordinances	Clint												
- Green Opportunities	Mike												
2. BUSINESS GROWTH PLAN	Amy												
- Business Plan Development	Kathleen												
- DDA Boundaries	Kathleen												
- Vacancy Inventory	Mike												
- Business Mix Attraction	Tanya												
- Business Support Workshops	Kathleen												
- Student Business Skills	Mary												
- DDA Business Contact List	Mary												
- Business Forum Meetings	Kathleen												
3. MARKETING PLAN	Kathleen												
- Clubs, Churches Contact List	Mary												
- Sponsorship Requests	Tanya												
- Communication Plan	Kathleen												
- Visitor Center	Amy												
- Quarterly Council Reports	Kathleen												
- Group Trip Packages	Kathleen												
- Prepare Budget	Amy												
4. INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN	Ken												
- Interconnectivity Plan	Sue												
- Parking Overview & Plan	Ken												
- Sign Ordinance Proposal	Tanya												
- Pedestrian Accessibility & Safety	Bill												
- High Speed Availability	Ken												

THREE-YEAR ROADMAP

Strategies were placed on a three-year business development roadmap as shown below to plan for growth in DDA services, programs, and infrastructure improvements. The first year is focused on planning; year two on implementation; and year three on accelerating growth with the new programs and infrastructure in place.

