

Sauk Village

A Strategic Plan for Progress



SAUK VILLAGE
MUNICIPAL CENTER



*Dedicated to
the People!*



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Our Village Government

Derrick Burgess
Mayor

Marva Campbell-Pruitt
Village Clerk

Village Trustees:

Cecial Tates
Rodrick R. Grant
Bernice Brewer

Kelvin Jones
Linda L. Todd
Beth Zupon

Police Chief
Robert J. Kowaski

Fire Chief
Alan Stoffregen

Emergency Management Agency Director
Allen Vavrik

Director of Finance
Mohan Rao

Director of Economic Development
Joseph Wiszowaty

Director of Community Development
Sherry Jasinski

Public Works Director
Kevin Weller

MAYOR DERRICK N BURGESS

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SAUK VILLAGE
“A Strategic Plan for Progress”
Sauk Village, Illinois

October 17, 2017

Dear Fellow Residents:

As your Mayor, my commitment to serving all the people of Sauk Village remains unwavering. To ensure we have a positive outlook on the future of Sauk Village, I can emphatically say, I look forward to seeing what Sauk Village can offer its long time as well as new residents. We must be resolute in our determination to make things better. Since May 2017, this current administration has been focusing on the Village’s short term as well as long term challenges. However, as eager as we are to make “all things new” while moving our Village in a different direction, we must be realistic about the current financial and operational challenges we face. We are emerging from a hard economic period and the challenges and opportunities that must be dealt with to be successful will require more than rhetoric.

By listening to you I quickly understand that we must do a better job of being prepared to address the uncertainties and challenges our Village may face. Sauk Village has the potential to be a great family community. And to make this a reality, it is incumbent upon us, your elected officials, to move in this direction.

It is in that spirit that I offer a refreshing change to how we govern. Together, we will focus on attainable solutions that will ensure Sauk Village’s future. Utilizing this ***Strategic Plan for Progress, (the Plan), we have already begun to*** implement bold new policies and procedures to address our current challenges.

The Plan is my statement of commitment to the residents of Sauk Village. It contains my ideas and planned initiatives as well as a working foundation for the future of Sauk Village. This Plan is the benchmark by which I will be measured as a leader.

As Mayor, I am a leader who will work collaboratively with the Board of Trustees to promote this vision and aspire to goals that protect the best of our Village while improving our quality of life. This Plan lays out specific steps that can make these goals a reality while recognizing that as a leader, my first responsibility is to reflect the intent of our community.

This document is intended to share my vision for our Village and to explain in clear terms, ‘where I stand’ and where we must go.

Respectfully submitted,

Derrick N. Burgess

Mayor of Sauk Village



A VISION FOR TOMORROW AND BEYOND

Can we improve our Village and the quality of life that we all share in Sauk Village?
Nearly everyone I speak with expresses concerns for our future.

My vision is that someday soon Sauk Village will be known as one of the best Villages for its size in the entire region. Let this plan be our Pathway and Strategic Plan for Progress.

My vision for the future rests on several key characteristics of outstanding communities. The foundation for our future exists in well established institutions and the businesses that drive our local economy, as well as the families and individuals that make up the neighborhoods in our Village. My vision for Sauk Village is a shared vision; one that requires the collective support of an entire community.

Here are the areas where we must do better if we are to improve our Village:

- Sauk Village must establish a foundation upon which it will build for the future through extensive and innovative strategic planning. Simply put, operating without a plan in turbulent times commits our Village to continue the reactionary approach rather than proactive leadership.
- Our Village government must become more efficient and innovative. Now is the time for new ideas and innovation if our Village is to provide important services in the future without placing the burden on the property owners and raising taxes.
- We must focus on building strong and cohesive neighborhoods that will work together to form a vibrant and diverse community, inclusive of all.
- We must work together to build our local economy and provide stable, quality jobs for our residents and the region. We are not in this alone and must work together with our local partners to achieve this goal.
- We must do a much better job of planning for development, transportation, traffic control and housing. Planning must enhance rather than weaken our quality of life. Updating the 1999 Comprehensive Plan is a priority that must be taken on immediately. We must provide proper land use and establish proper policy to meet the future needs of our Village.
- We must set and maintain high standards of public safety. Returning our Police Department to the respected position it deserves is a priority from day one. Increasing the morale of the department and for all Village employees is important as they too are stakeholders in the success of our Village.
- Our Village must create and maintain an atmosphere of clean streets, safe parks and neighborhoods, and activities for all citizens.

This Plan lays out specific steps that can make these goals a reality. None will be implemented without first building community understanding and consensus as to the views, needs and aspirations of the entire community. The implementation of programs and new initiatives as outlined in this Plan are designed to be completed within the established budget and consistent with my philosophy of keeping taxes low.

This “Strategic Plan for Progress” is more than a fancy catch phrase, it is a commitment to the residents of Sauk Village. Our Leadership will listen openly, honestly and actively with the residents of the village.

- The Mayor and Village Board will bring new ideas and a common sense approach to Village government leadership. We will explore new ways to stretch tax dollars and bring jobs to Sauk Village and the region. We will bring more emphasis to Village planning to improve struggling areas, and strengthen local businesses. We will be open, honest and transparent with a positive attitude and we will bring a renewed sense of optimism to live up to the Village’s motto “Pride and Progress”. Steady progress will instill more pride.
- The Mayor and Village Board believe Sauk Village is a great community, but we must do much better. We are a Village within a region of great resources and we need to raise our standards in many areas. Better planning, higher standards of cleanliness, better roads and sidewalks and tighter fiscal management are just some areas we will be careful to address.
- The Mayor and Village Board believe in proactive planning. We will bring a more strategic planning approach to Village government. We will not wait for problems to arise before addressing them but will work to identify potential problems and identify solutions that make sense.
- The Mayor and Village Board will bring a new perspective to Sauk Village. We will focus on the problems at hand. Change is healthy in government because it brings in new ideas and perspectives and builds further on the foundation already in place.
- The Mayor and Village Board are committed to having an open door and open mind in responding to residents. We will bring a new level of communication and responsiveness that will be active, honest, open and transparent to all Village residents and employees.
- The Mayor and Village Board will retain and recruit Village department heads who fully understand the importance of providing the highest level of service to citizens and pursue excellence in all that their department undertakes. Department heads will also pledge to an having open door policy that encourages public input and communication. Department heads will focus on running their departments professionally. Department heads and all employees of the Village will be evaluated to ensure all are providing the optimal service for taxpayers.
- The Mayor and Village Board will foster a spirit of professionalism, creativity, fiscal responsibility and compassion in Village leadership.
- The Mayor and Village Board believe in the power of partnership. We feel that one of the most important roles of local government is to foster those partnerships among all stakeholders: residents, businesses, non-profits, labor, education and government. We will work diligently to build the trust of these groups and find win-win opportunities so that the people of Sauk Village and surrounding communities succeed.

DETAILS OF THE SAUK VILLAGE

"A Strategic Plan for Progress"



Directing Growth through careful Planning

Sauk Village will continue to grow in size and population over the next decade. The economic downturn in 2008 has made this all the more challenging. Many feel that Sauk Village has been left out of the modest economic recovery we have seen in surrounding areas. The Mayor and Village Board believe we must improve our planning in order to initiate growth so that it compliments our Village and improves our quality of life.

The 1999 Comprehensive Plan is long over-due for an update. Mayor Burgess and the Village Board of Trustees are committed to updating this plan as a priority. The Village must properly

plan for growth so that we can curtail the Village's declining equalized assessed valuation and rising property taxes. Our objective is to promote affordable, modest-sized and luxury homeownership.

Mayor Burgess plans to update the Village's Commercial Design Standards and Guidelines to ensure we have higher standards for commercial development. Mayor Burgess will also lead the Village's Economic Development Strategy. Once the Comprehensive Plan is completed, it will provide the foundation, standards and planning needed for all future commercial, industrial and residential development and land use. Mayor Burgess believes Sauk Village must employ smart growth strategies to ensure that all new growth is consistent with sound planning principles. Mayor Burgess believes that redeveloping struggling commercial areas in the Village is vital to the future success of the Village. Surreybrook Plaza, Sauk Plaza and strip plazas on Sauk Trail all need serious attention and partnerships with the Village business owners. Mayor Burgess believes that redevelopment takes more focus and effort than new development, and he will make it a major priority to raise the standards of these areas.

The Strategic Plan for improving Village Planning

Sauk Village must initiate annexation of all residential, commercial and industrial lands which are near the Village limits if these areas are to receive Village water, sewer or municipal services. The Village must also explore the annexation of areas that already exist near the Village but are not annexed into the Village. A careful annexation strategy will not increase taxes on existing village residents. A greater focus with Cook County officials will make this process smoother.

The Mayor and Board of Trustees will strive to limit any multi-family or rental developments while using incentives to encourage home ownership in its quest to transition from a large pocket of rental units to a majority of homeowners. We see this as a benefit to our Village and rebuilding pride in our community.

The Mayor and Board of Trustees will strive to redevelop the Surreybrook Plaza and Sauk Plaza (Sauk Trail Corridor) through private and public partnerships over the next five years. Use of public-private financing options to assist the redevelopment efforts can be considered by Village officials.

The Mayor and Board of Trustees will put greater focus on improving traffic flow and street improvements especially in areas that have seen an increase in traffic. The Mayor and Village Board support and will lobby state and federal officials to improve the current Illinois Route 394/IL Route 1 Corridor Plan (June, 2015). This will provide greater safety for residents and better traffic flow for nearly 43,000 cars and trucks that use this intersection each day.

Mayor Burgess will work with Chicago Metropolitan Area for Planning (CMAP) Cook County, Illinois and PACE Transportation officials to improve lighting and safety at Sauk Trail and Torrence Avenue. Installation of proper crosswalks and crosswalk safety devices are a priority and proper bus services and facilities which provide greater convenience, safety and aesthetics.

An updated Comprehensive Plan will address many land use and planning issues in the Village. The Mayor and Board of Trustees will work to better adhere to a new Comprehensive Land Use Plan as the basis for decision making.

Fiscal Management – Doing more with less in Village government

Mayor Burgess will bring a new perspective to the Village’s finances and will challenge the Department Heads to identify ways to reduce the cost of providing services through increased efficiencies and innovation. By making a fact-based approach to identifying what is essential for the optimal operations of the Village, Mayor Burgess will shape the Village Administration so that it works harder and smarter on behalf of its residents.

The Strategic Plan to improve fiscal management

Mayor Burgess will create a business efficiency task force to analyze Village services and assist the Village in finding new, more-efficient ways of providing services. The task force will conduct a “full potential” benchmarking of Sauk Village compared to similar communities. The task force will determine best practices in providing each Village service. Utilizing a fact-based approach to identify best practices will target areas where Sauk Village’s services can be performed using better and more effective methods. Members of the task force may include a Trustee, Village employees and appointed Village residents. Mayor Burgess will actively monitor progress and recommendations made by the task force to ensure savings are realized. Mayor Burgess may also provide incentives to departments that find new ways to cut costs and improve efficiency. Mayor Burgess will assist the departments in identifying resources to aid in delivering their services more effectively to residents.

- The Mayor and Board of Trustees must create a balanced budget and it must be presented to the public in a timely manner. The Village’s budget determines how effectively it will operate for the upcoming year. The budget process must be open, honest and transparent.
- The Mayor and Board of Trustees must create a rainy day “contingency fund” to set aside funds to weather the next economic downturn.

- The Mayor and Board of Trustees must better communicate Village budget and spending issues to Village residents and seek their input on improving effectiveness in delivery of services.
- The Mayor and Board of Trustees must implement a budgetary process so that budgets are passed before the start of the next fiscal year.
- All Village employees must be involved in making improvements in the delivery of Village services by fostering an empowerment leadership style that renews and recognizes improved customer service and real cost cutting measures through greater efficiency and innovation
- Mayor Burgess will implement sound fiscal policies and procedures addressing the Village budget, purchasing, credit card, capital asset, debt management, investment and revenue and cash management.
- Mayor Burgess will identify a method to manage the rising costs of providing quality insurance benefits to Village employees. The Village's cost of providing insurance each year is extremely high, and must be addressed to responsibly resolve our budget challenges. Mayor Burgess recognizes and respects the importance of health care coverage for all employees.
- Mayor Burgess will manage litigation between the Village and residents/employees in order to mitigate legal fees. Mayor Burgess plans to assign each department its own Risk Management and Safety officer. In addition, the Village will have a Risk Management and Public Safety Committee comprised of employees which shall meet to mitigate the Village's exposure to potentially costly liability.
- Mayor Burgess will place more emphasis on obtaining federal and state grants to fund Village projects, training and equipment. Grant writing and research training will be a central part of this Administration.

Strong Neighborhoods Make Strong Villages

Sauk Village is made up of several subdivisions and neighborhoods, the strengths of those individual neighborhoods creates the vitality of the whole. Each neighborhood has its unique characteristics. Mayor Burgess will emphasize neighborhoods as part of his effort to improve the Village. Mayor Burgess will communicate with representatives of these neighborhoods to identify their needs. Mayor Burgess believes that Village resources can be used to augment the natural and human resources within the various neighborhoods. He believes that by building consensus in each neighborhood, this will greatly benefit the entire Village and a greater sense of ownership is achieved.

Strategic Plan to strengthen neighborhoods

- Establish a Citizen Advisory Council Board for the purpose of mobilizing neighborhoods to address their concerns and celebrate their strengths. Use Village resources to leverage neighborhood resources in making improvements.
- Create a "Neighborhood Network" homepage on the village's website where residents easily identify what is happening in their neighborhood and how they can be involved in its progress.
- Encourage more leadership within the individual neighborhoods and work with those leaders in creating a comprehensive vision for the Village.
- Actively communicate and meet with neighborhoods on a regular basis to assess local needs and respond innovatively.
- Encourage volunteerism from all parts of the community to encourage diversity and cooperation.

Economic Development: Creating Quality Jobs for Quality People

Sauk Village must become a community where young people can return after college or vocational training and find employment opportunities. Jobs are created by individuals and companies, not government. The Mayor's role is to help create the best environment for businesses to grow. Our continued partnership with *economic development partners* is a critical component to Sauk Village's success.



To date, industrial and manufacturing development totals 2,400,120 SF in LogistiCenter at Sauk Village. Upon total build-out, the 525-acre business park will accommodate approximately 5,000,000 SF of high-cube distribution and manufacturing space and attract between 500 and 1,500 jobs. While we have a good beginning, we must work harder to develop the LogistiCenter and this will be a priority for Sauk Village. LogistiCenter at Sauk Village offers the maximum in facility flexibility. Sites from 5 to 75 acres are available

for sale or build-to-suit. All facilities are custom designed to meet the most demanding specifications. All facilities in the park are built to Class A quality specifications, designed to protect the investment of tenants, the owner/developer, and the Village of Sauk Village.

The Strategic Plan to improve Economic Development

Mayor Burgess's vision for business development involves doing do everything in our power to help our current developers and businesses to expand. This is vital because approximately 75% of new jobs result from the growth of existing businesses. We must also create an "entrepreneurial environment" within our Village that helps small businesses get started and grow. Further, we need to take a targeted approach to attracting new business and industry. We must identify those types of businesses which would be a natural fit for our Village and pursue them with tenacity and innovation.

Creating economic development and employment opportunities is a team effort. Mayor Burgess will work closely with local businesses in their job creation efforts. Mayor Burgess will also explore partnership opportunities with the State of Illinois, the Illinois Department of Commerce, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, local labor unions, Prairie State College, Governors State University, the McConathy Public Library and Bloom Trail High School to create job training opportunities.

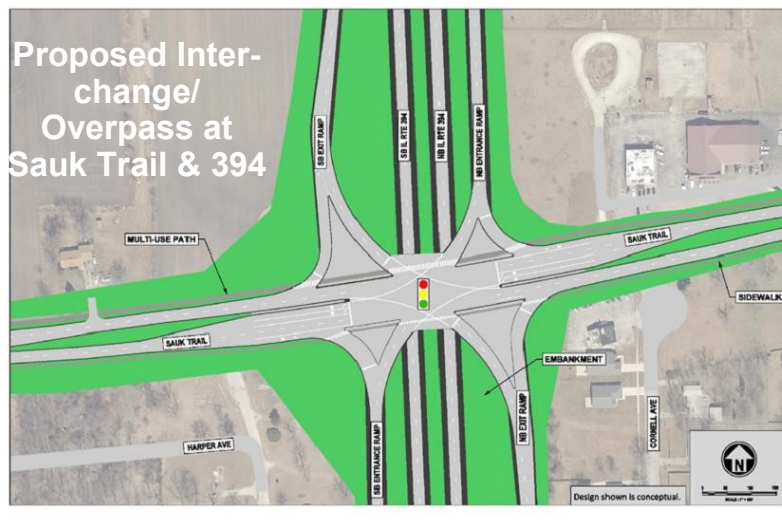
- Organize a small business council of area employers and meet regularly to discuss ways the Village can help them expand and grow their businesses. The Mayor and Village Board will study how to remove obstacles to the creation of new jobs through expansion. Mayor Burgess will assist small businesses in finding incentives and funding to grow.
- Explore the creation of a young business incubator in the Village. Partner with local colleges and universities to provide the support to help small business owners get a good start with limited funds and then expand their business over time.
- Explore all of the tax incentives for job creation (such as Tax Increment Financing, 6B and 8 Tax Classifications, etc). Find ways to utilize these incentives and others to the fullest extent possible to help our existing businesses to grow and to encourage new business and industry in Sauk Village.
- Ensure we have the necessary technological infrastructure in place to facilitate business needs.
- Avoid a shotgun approach to bringing new businesses to Sauk Village. Focus on certain sectors such as food services and smaller retail which may be best suited to our area. Work with developers to build commercial and light industrial within certain areas where we have the space.
- Support our school system and its drive for excellence, recognizing that our school system is vital to economic development. Companies want to locate in communities with superior schools that are financially sound.
- Redeveloping struggling commercial areas in the Village is vitally important to economic development. Businesses will not locate in Villages that appear to be declining. Surreybrook Plaza and Sauk Plaza must be improved; we must work in partnership in order to help facilitate the improvements businesses want.
- Encouraging “life long learning” in Sauk Village. Constant retraining of the workforce and development of personal skills is necessary to compete in the marketplace.

Improving our infrastructure: It's time to invest in the future of our Village.

A business owner knows they must continue to reinvest in their business to keep it vibrant and healthy; a Village is no different. Improving roads, sidewalks, sewer system and parks is necessary to keep Sauk Village looking sharp and functioning well. As Sauk Village is a Village of limited resources, we must still strive to find the funds to improve our aging infrastructure and build for the future. Mayor Burgess will identify and prioritize the most pressing infrastructure needs and find the funds to get the job done. Mayor Burgess together with the Board of Trustees understand this will be a long and difficult process, but it is achievable with diligence and hard work.

The Strategic Plan to rebuild Sauk Village's Infrastructure

- Compile a five and ten year Capital Improvement Plan to prioritize infrastructure needs in the Village and identify the funds necessary to complete those projects.
- Aggressively repair and replace fire hydrants with a specific timeline for completion
- Aggressively work to complete all necessary water main repairs in a more proactive approach. Water main replacement should be included in a Capital Improvement Plan completed by the Village Engineer and staff.



- Mayor Burgess supports and will lobby for a *safer and proper interchange at Sauk Trail and 394* which has been part of the Illinois Department of Transportation's plan for decades. An initial modification has been completed, however, more changes are clearly needed to address the increased traffic flow since the modification. Mayor Burgess will be pursuing proper changes which will better provide multi-use pathway accommodations for both pedestrians and bicycles crossing Illinois 394.

- Create a sidewalk reconstruction program. Partnering with neighborhood organizations and residents to complete missing links in the sidewalks and repair damaged sections.
- Work collaboratively with the Cook County Forest Preserve District on improving land around and in Sauk Village for biking/walking and recreational pathways within their jurisdiction.
- Appoint staff and/or possibly a grant writer to aggressively seek all grants available for projects and help train staff to research and write grant requests.
- Better coordinate the various departments, boards and commissions to adopt a common vision for infrastructure priorities and objectives.
- Explore the potential of obtaining federal funds for larger capital projects, which many Illinois communities have done successfully.
- *Marked crosswalks* aid in safe pedestrian crossing across streets, but they are most effective when used in combination with additional tools. Marked crosswalks should be installed at all

points crossing Sauk Trail and Torrence Avenue and near schools, shopping areas, parks and trails.

- ***Pedestrian Signals*** should be installed at all points where traffic control devices are installed on Sauk Trail, specifically Jeffrey Avenue, Orion Avenue and Torrence Avenue.
- ***Flashing School Zone lights*** should be installed on Torrence Avenue to warn motorists of the school zone and reduced speeds during times when students are entering and leaving Rickover Jr. High School.

Vibrant Commercial Districts

Vibrant commercial districts are vital to the reputation and future success of the entire Village. Mayor Burgess will support the commercial districts' businesses and property owners with programs and initiatives designed to enhance the vitality of commercial districts.

The Strategic Plan to create vibrant Commercial Districts

- The Mayor will appoint a Commercial Development Committee to create and establish a Community Development Plan and apply the recommendations of the plan.
- Explore new ways to encourage mixed-use commercial developments within Sauk Village along Sauk Trail where space permits, work with the Zoning Board/Plan Commission to address such needs and locations.
- Challenge business owners to create a business improvement district and consider alternate revenue sources to fund improvements (ie Business District, Tax Increment Financing Districts).
- Improve the commercial areas landscaping and signage to create a distinct and uniform look for Sauk Village.
- Expand festivals and events to better showcase our retailers and restaurants. Strengthen the link between our merchants and residents.

Keeping our Village Safe-State of the Art Police, Fire and EMA Departments



Mayor Burgess believes strongly in public safety and feels our emergency service departments should set the standard for professionalism, specialized training, use of technology, state of the art equipment and cooperation with other departments. He will focus safety efforts on prevention and deterrence. Mayor Burgess wants to explore taking Community Policing to the next level and create a stronger bond between the residents of Sauk Village and the men and women who risk their lives to keep them safe. A proactive approach to public safety is vital to success.

The Strategic Plan to create a safer Village

- Implement a Public Safety Plan
- Develop Community Policing in neighborhoods to bring our Police closer to the citizens they serve.
- Pursue accreditation and joint training of our Police, Fire, and EMA Departments to improve their operations and enhance their reputations.
- Support efforts to fight drug trade, domestic violence and juvenile crime.
- Work closely with and support the proactive efforts of our local school systems in encouraging responsible behavior.
- Create five and ten year capital equipment plans for the Police, Fire, and EMA Departments to better plan for equipment needs and to ensure our Departments have state of the art equipment to carry out their duties safely.
- Seek cooperation and regular collaboration with neighboring Police, Fire, and EMA Departments to create synergy and a collective effort.
- Increase fire and police personnel involvement within the community in a more proactive way.
- Explore new ways to involve individual neighborhoods in public safety issues through a Village-based web based crime watch program.
- Seek grants and other alternative sources of revenue to assist the Police, Fire, and EMA Departments .
- Begin a study to construct adequate and safe facilities for Public Safety.
- Begin a structured Police & Fire Cadet Program or Explorers to encourage young Villagers to enter community service and hopefully serve as a Police Officer or Fire Fighter within Sauk Village
- Work collaboratively with other Police agencies to proactively fight crime.
- Explore ways to consolidate to save the taxpayers money.

Investing in our Youth and Rebuilding Parks, Recreation & Youth Programs



Engaging and investing in our Youth is a must for building a *Pathway to Progress!*

life.

An active Village that values the importance of recreation and leisure activities is a healthy and prosperous community. Sauk Village needs to continue to build a solid system of parks and recreational facilities. Mayor Burgess, who once served as Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Committee while on the Village Board, understands the need for a group of dedicated resident volunteers. He values the importance of a healthy lifestyle for all ages. As such, he is committed to building on the time honored programs and recreational events of our Parks, Recreation and Youth Services Committee to further enhance the important asset to our quality of

The Strategic Plan to improve our Parks, Recreation and Youth Services

- Help provide opportunities for citizens of all ages access educational and fitness oriented programs by the Parks, Recreation and Youth Services Committee.
- Campaign and work collaboratively with the Cook County Forest Preserve District in the planning and construction of safe paths and routes through the Forest Preserves and enhancing that with safe routes connecting to all parts of the Village.
- Support, supplement and enhance the fitness and health curricula in our schools with after school and summer programs.
- Promote more athletic competitions in Sauk Village such as softball tournaments, volleyball, basketball, etc.
- Properly fund the Parks, Recreation and Youth Services Committee with the full amount that residents are taxed.
- Market Sauk Village as a healthy life style community to enhance our reputation and create a Village where active young people desire to live.
- Establish partnerships with not-for-profit groups and organizations to enhance programs available for Parks & Recreation
- Establish an independent Parks, Recreation and Youth Services Commission with a Village Trustee as a liaison.

Guaranteeing Clean Water and a Healthy Environment

Water is the essence of life. Clean water is our most essential natural resource. Mayor Burgess believes the Village must take the necessary steps to address the residents' mandate of securing an alternate water source. Mayor Burgess also believes it is the Village's priority to ensure our current water source operates within the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's standards. This requires protecting our water supply and making sure there is an ample supply for many years to come. Mayor Burgess also believes in showing respect for the environment and being a good steward of our natural resources.

The Strategic Plan to move towards clean water and healthier environment

- Ensure the mandate of the Lake Michigan Water Referendum approved by the voters in March, 2012 is begun and completed. This may take many years, but a plan with a reasonable timeline should be initiated and on its path toward completion.
- Explore partnerships with the City of Chicago Heights, Lynwood and other sources to complete our Lake Michigan water connection to ensure the residents secure the most cost effective approach to receiving water.
- Initiate and complete the recommendations by Robinson Engineering to upgrade the Village's water infrastructure as required by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.
- Continue to improve upon an aggressive waste recycling program.
- Utilize planning to encourage green spaces and environmentally-friendly water management in new developments as well as redevelopment projects.
- Encourage efforts to increase awareness of environmental concerns and opportunities.
- Work with our waste hauler to improve services to residents.

Strong Schools for Sauk Village

Educating our children is the foundation for our future. Mayor Burgess will be a Mayor who is supportive of quality education and partnerships with the three elementary school districts within Sauk Village and High School District 206. He will work closely with the school administrations to ensure our school systems continue to work toward becoming the finest in the state. Mayor Burgess will also celebrate and fully support the concept of lifelong learning, so education is embraced by all citizens and seen as a journey, not a destination.

The Strategic Plan to support excellence in education

- Meet regularly with the Superintendent of our Elementary Schools and District 206 to discuss school and Village issues and explore areas of cooperation and opportunity. Increase regular communication with Prairie State and Governors State University.
- Support and enhance educational opportunities within the McConathy Public Library.
- Seek the active involvement of parents in the dialogue to support excellence in education.
- Support lifelong learning and lead by example. Encourage community efforts to encourage reading, discussion, education and communication.

Communication: Improving Our Dialogue

Effective communication is an essential ingredient for progress. Many residents feel there is a lack of communication between Village government and residents. The Village plans to develop new tools and methods for improving a two-way communication with residents. In addition, the various departments, committees, commissions and boards plan to improve upon their written communications so a common vision and spirit of cooperation can emerge. Mayor Burgess will implement new ideas to improve Village outreach to residents.

The Strategic Plan to improve communication

- Revamp and effectively utilize the Village’s website to communicate with residents.
- Mayor Burgess plans to provide weekly updates on time sensitive information via the village’s website and other social media. Electronic options must have the ability to be interactive via a user-friendly chatroom or blog where ideas or complaints can be logged.
- Develop a web-based communication program where neighbors can connect electronically to address common issues.
- Change the format of the Village Board meetings to address Village issues in a proactive way. For example, schedule a program on a particular issue or Village service and then invite input. Schedule these programs in advance so residents are aware of the opportunity to participate.
- Use workshops or common strategic planning sessions between Village Board meetings to discuss policy and planning.
- Host a weekly column online blog or newsletter for the Mayor and Village Board members to address Village issues and opportunities.
- Set aside regular “open office” time each week where the Mayor is free to meet with residents who want to express concerns.

Home Ownership Promotion & Expansion (H.O.P.E.)

Mayor Burgess will be a strong advocate for expanding home ownership opportunities in Sauk Village for young families and first-time homebuyers through grants and down payment assistance partnerships. **Operation H.O.P.E.** will move the village in a new direction and will be a beginning down the Pathway to Progress when it comes to housing and increasing values!

The Strategic Plan to Home Ownership

Addressing vacant and abandoned homes will need some creative thinking when it comes to financing options for homebuyers. Mayor Burgess will work together in partnership with several financial institutions and not-for-profit organizations to offer options for homebuyers who will occupy homes in Sauk Village. Creative financing options will include:

- Federal Housing Agency’s 203k Rehabilitation Loan for homebuyers
- Federal Home Loan Bank Down Payment Assistance Programs
- Other Down Payment Assistance Programs
- Collaboration with the South Suburban Land Bank Development Authority
- Collaboration with other housing programs

2017 Strategic Plan for Progress

**Authorized by
The Honorable Mayor
Derrick N. Burgess of
Sauk Village**