



OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Strategic Plan and 2016 Business Plan



OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Back Row (Left to Right): Donald G. Disselkoen - District 3; Mike Haverdink - District 5; Matthew R. Fenske - District 11; Dennis L. Van Dam - District 6; Roger A. Bergman - District 10; Stuart P. Visser - District 1; James H. Holtvluwer - District 7

Front Row (Left to Right): Philip D. Kuyers - District 9;
Chair Joseph S. Baumann - District 2; Vice-Chair Greg J. De Jong - District 8;
Allen Dannenberg - District 4;

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Process Summary

Ottawa County, the eighth-largest county in Michigan, is a beautiful community of 279,955 people located along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The government that serves the community is comprised of approximately 1,100 employees and elected officials with occupations as diverse as nursing, parks, corrections, administration, and law enforcement.

An 11-member Board of Commissioners, each elected to a two-year term, governs the County. The Board of Commissioners establishes the general direction of government and provides oversight of administrative functions of the County. The Board appoints a County Administrator who manages the budget, provides leadership and management of Board initiatives, and oversees general County operations. The remaining operations are managed by either elected officers (Clerk/Register of Deeds, Water Resources Commissioner, Prosecutor, Sheriff, and Treasurer), statutory boards (Community Mental Health), or the judiciary.

While the Board of Commissioners had conducted strategic planning activities in the past, the County had not had an active strategic plan, mission, or organizational values in place for several years, so in 2004 the Board began collecting information needed to develop a plan. This included the employee and resident surveys, a study of mandated services, employee input on the mission statement, evaluations of several departments, a wage and classification study, the United Way Community Needs Assessment, and definitions of the County's financing tools.

After collecting and considering this information, the Board met on March 23 and 24, 2006, to begin work on its strategic plan. That initial plan was adopted and implemented over the next two years. The Board now meets annually to review the strategic plan and develop an accompanying business plan comprised of objectives that serve as action steps toward achieving the strategic plan.

The Board of Commissioners met on March 17, 2016, to review the current strategic plan and create the business plan for 2016. This involved a review of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing the County, a confirmation of major goals, and the development and ranking of objectives. After the Board established draft objectives, Administration assigned resources to each objective, and developed outcome measures which will indicate success in completing the plan's goals. The results of the process follow.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Components

A **VISION** statement indicates how an organization views its ideal, or ultimate, goal. The Board of Commissioners has established the following vision statement:

Where you belong.

A **MISSION** statement assists an organization in easily communicating to a variety of constituencies what it does, who it serves, and why it does so. The Board of Commissioners has established the following mission statement:

Ottawa County is committed to excellence and the delivery of cost-effective public services.

GOALS focus the direction of an organization's work, under the guidance from the vision and mission statement. Goals are relatively static in nature and will not often change. The four goals of the Board of Commissioners are:

1. To maintain and improve the strong financial position of the County.
2. To maintain and enhance communication with citizens, employees and other stakeholders.
3. To contribute to the long-term economic, social and environmental health of the County.
4. To continually improve the County's organization and services.

A formal statement of organizational values was developed to clearly identify not only the principles upon which the organization is based, but the way in which it treats its employees and residents.

We recognize the importance of the **DEMOCRATIC PROCESS** in the accomplishment of our mission, and hold it as a basic value to respect the rule of the majority and the voted choices of the people; to support the decisions of duly elected officials; and to refrain from interference with the elective process.

We recognize the importance of the **LAW** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to work within, uphold, support, and impartially enforce the law.

We recognize the importance of **ETHICS** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to always act truthfully, honestly, honorably and without deception; to seek no favor; and to receive no extraordinary personal gain from the performance of our official duties.

We recognize the importance of **SERVICE** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to treat each resident as a customer; to do all we can, within the bounds of the County's laws, regulations, policies and budget, to meet requests for service.

We recognize the importance of **EMPLOYEES** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to treat each employee with professional respect, recognizing that each person using his or her trade or vocation makes a valuable contribution; to treat each employee impartially, fairly and consistently; and to listen to the recommendations and concerns of each.

We recognize the importance of **DIVERSITY** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to treat all people with respect and courtesy.

We recognize the importance of **PROFESSIONALISM** in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value that each employee will perform to the highest professional standards and to his or her highest personal capabilities.

We recognize the importance of **STEWARDSHIP** of public money in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to discharge our stewardship in a responsible, cost-effective manner, always remembering and respecting the source of the County's funding.

BUSINESS PLAN - 2016

OBJECTIVES, DELIVERABLES, OUTPUTS, AND OUTCOMES

While goals are relatively static in nature, the objectives that assist in accomplishing the goals are likely to change annually. Deliverables are items that give further meaning and substance to an objective. Outputs are specific items of action and outcome indicators are a measure of success, demonstrating the impact of actions conducted to achieve goals and objectives.

Prior to setting goals, members of the Board of Commissioners examined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats affecting the County as a whole. The items in each category are not ranked by importance, nor is this intended to be an all-inclusive list, however it forms a basis for the development of goals and objectives. In addition, the items identified provide a view of potential issues that may impact the environment in which the County provides services in the near- or long-term future.

STRENGTHS

- People and employees
 - Ahead of curve with information and answers of what public may ask
 - Innovative programs
 - County health management program
 - Strong credit rating
 - Improved perception of County by local units of government, and the collaboration/partnerships with local units and others
 - Lake Michigan, natural beauty
 - Good reputation
 - Influential with legislators (State/Federal)
 - Human services - take care of needs in County
 - Communication - use of social media
- Environmentally sound
- Work ethic and integrity
- Recreational opportunities, park system including state parks
- Facilities
- Economically diverse, business community
- Strong school systems, including higher education
- Health ratings - #1 County for Health
- Financial stability - as a result but also how we manage to retain it
- Staff pro-active to find ways to save money
- Strength of agriculture community
 - Character and culture of the people that live here - reflect people we serve
 - TIF report/analysis - impact decision making
 - Insurance authority and other financing tools
 - Leadership and vision - look into the future/long-term thinking
 - Low millage rate
 - Public safety
 - Unity and working structure of Board of Commissioners
 - Improved communication/relationship with Roads Commission
- Minority interaction/involvement
- Embracing diversity
- Separation of police/fire at local levels (duplication)
- Number of school districts
- Revenue sharing loss/threats
- Three Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in County
- Changes in healthcare systems with Community Mental Health and Public Health
- Lack of water/sewer infrastructure in some areas of the County
- Look beyond 5-10 years into the future
- Road Commission - state law requires them to have staff on-duty even when not needed

OPPORTUNITIES

- Legislation at end of terms/lame duck
 - Review potential tax reduction annually
 - Remaining unfunded legacy costs
 - Next phase of M-231
 - ⇒More proactive
 - ⇒Unfunded mandates
 - Court funding
 - Legislative - road commission rule about workers on duty 24/7
 - Further promotion of farmer markets
 - M-231 Run
 - Groundwater study - work ahead on a problem
 - Public Utilities - examine options for water/sewer infrastructure, county acts to convene partners
 - Maintain agriculture base and economy we have, stress importance and long-term value of farmland
 - Planning education - planning/zoning/enforcement training and best management practices for locals
 - Standard and Poor's bond rating
 - Community Mental Health and other healthcare systems
 - Administrative infrastructure - continue to offer IT and other services
- Aging population
 - Pressure to reduce taxes when times are good
- School Bond loan fund - Coopersville, Allendale
 - ⇒State shortened amortization schedule period which is driving up cost and millages
- Uncertainty/volatile economy
 - "Unemployables" in citizenry
 - Cost of health care
 - Water - water resource study outcomes
 - Managing growth - maintain open space/agriculture land
 - Infrastructure - lead in water issues
 - EPA air quality rules
 - Solid waste
 - Invasive species/fish farms/other threats to sport fishing and related industries
 - Growth in unfunded mandates
 - Expanded fed/state regulations

THREATS

- Agriculture community need for new farmers
- Economic uncertainty
- Lack of affordable housing
- Funding from state weak in areas, so had to have two special millages for roads and mental health
- Unfunded mandates
- Roads
- Minority interaction/involvement
- Embracing diversity
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WEAKNESSES

WHAT DO WE WANT TO DO?

HOW WILL WE KNOW OUR ACTIONS WERE EFFECTIVE?

GOAL 1: TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNTY.

Objective 1: Maintain and improve current processes and implement new strategies to retain a **balanced budget**.

- *Provide information to the Board necessary to make key decisions, adopting the budget by the end of September.*
- *Annually review the general operating millage rate.*
- *Successfully transition to a new Fiscal Year beginning 10/1/2016.*
- *Identify financial threats and approve strategies to mitigate those threats.*
- *Maintain the health of the County financing tools.*
- *Maintain the health of the Insurance Authority, investigating the use of funds for projects that lower County liability.*
- *Continue strategies to contain the cost of health benefits, including; health plan design, bidding out our health plan to the market, and implementation of the health management plan.*
- *Continue to evaluate and adopt strategies to address remaining pension and retiree health liabilities.*
- *Continue to develop the Capital Improvement Plan, identifying projects needed in the future and the funding to pay for it.*

Objective 2: Maintain and improve the financial position of the County through **legislative advocacy**.

- *Develop a clear legislative action plan with regular tracking and reporting to the Board.*
- *Communicate legislative positions with associated talking points that can be used with legislators.*
- *Advocate on the issue of unfunded mandates, seeking to eliminate the addition of new unfunded mandates and to receive full funding for existing unfunded mandates.*
- *Advocate to protect revenue sharing payments to counties.*
- *Advocate for improvements in court funding by the State, including "Raise the Age" legislation that would move more juveniles into the county juvenile criminal justice system.*
- *Advocate for improvements to how property values are assessed under Michigan Tax Tribunal rules.*

Objective 3: Maintain or improve **bond credit ratings**.

- *Maintain a balanced budget with pro-active strategies.*
- *Present high quality information to bond rating agencies.*
- *Continue to strive for "triple-triple" bond ratings.*

Board receives financial information in a timely fashion in order to adopt and monitor the budget.

- Board reviews information on the financing tools, including the Insurance Authority.

Board reviews information and strategies regarding the cost of health benefits and pension/retiree health liabilities. Board reviews the Capital Improvement Plan, developing a funding strategy for future facility and equipment needs.

Budgets are adopted on time without deficits.

The County financing tools are fully funded, helping to keep the general operating millage rate lower than comparable counties. Pension and retiree liabilities are fully funded. Cost of employee benefits are lower than benchmarks. The County is able to fund equipment and facility needs.

Clear legislative position statements are produced and made available for use by Commissioners, staff and the public. Staff and lobbyist provide regular updates to the Board.

County legislative position statements are used by stakeholders in the legislative process. The legislative action plan is recognized for receiving results. Positive legislation is adopted and negative legislation defeated.

Board adopts a balanced budget.

Communicate with bond rating agencies as scheduled.

Achieve and maintain the top ratings from all rating agencies.

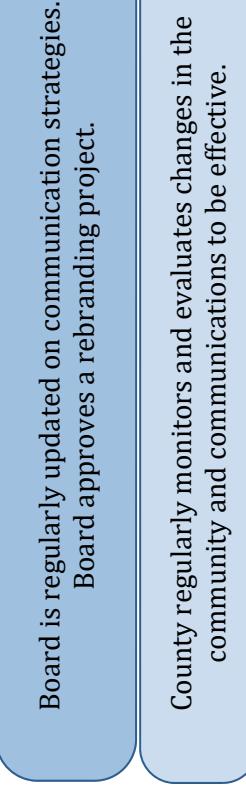
WHAT DO WE WANT TO DO?

How WILL WE KNOW OUR ACTIONS WERE EFFECTIVE?

GOAL 2: TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION WITH CITIZENS, EMPLOYEES, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS.

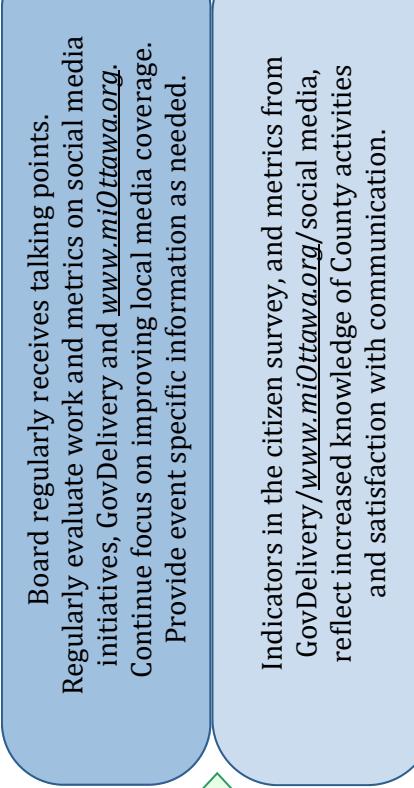
Objective 1: Regularly review and update **communication strategies** that guide the work of the County in this goal area.

- Provide regular updates to the Board regarding communications and the work of the communications manager.
- Consider and evaluate new opportunities and methods of communication with stakeholders.
- Initiate a "rebranding" project.



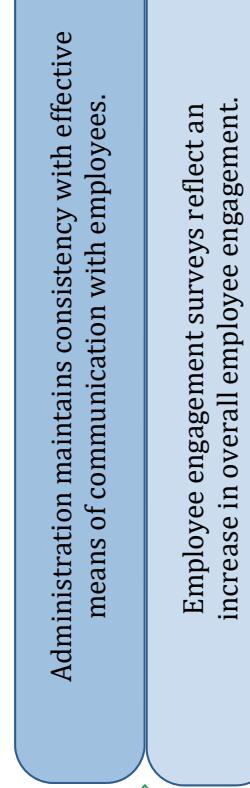
Objective 2: Maximize communication with **citizens**.

- Provide talking points for Commissioners on various topics for use when interacting with the public and other stakeholders.
- Evaluate existing and new technology and initiatives to improve engagement with citizens; including social media and GovDelivery.
- Continue an increased focus on improving local media coverage, communicating key messages like the value proposition of taxes to service levels the County provides.
- Continue to improve www.miOttawa.org, increasing and improving the information and services that citizens can access.
- Provide timely and thorough information updates on key issues, like the M-231 project.



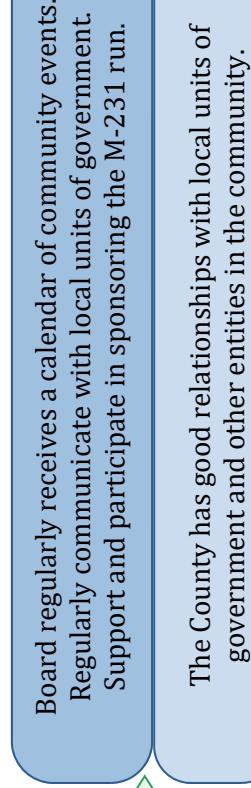
Objective 3: Continue to develop and implement methods of communicating with **employees**.

- Continue to develop and use effective methods for communications with employees, including; newsletters, employee portal and all-staff emails.
- Continue the Labor-Management Cooperation Committee.
- Continue brown-bag lunches and other information sessions.



Objective 4: Evaluate communication with **other key stakeholders**.

- Meet with community leaders on a regular basis, increasing the involvement of Commissioners with the community.
- Continue the M-231 run and evaluate other community building events.
- Continue communications with local units of government, including the use of quadrant meetings.



WHAT DO WE WANT TO DO?

HOW WILL WE KNOW OUR ACTIONS WERE EFFECTIVE?

GOAL 3: TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OF THE COUNTY.

Objective 1: Consider initiatives that contribute to the **economic** health and sustainability of the County and its' residents.

- *Work with partners (Lakeshore Advantage) to contribute to the economic development of the County.*
- *Maintain regular communication with the Road Commission, monitoring the road commission report/memorandum of understanding.*

- *Facilitate work with the State, Road Commission and local units of government to plan for future phasing of M-231.*
- *Continue work developing the Great Lakes Agricultural Technology Business Incubator (GLATBI) to recognize the role of agriculture in our economy.*

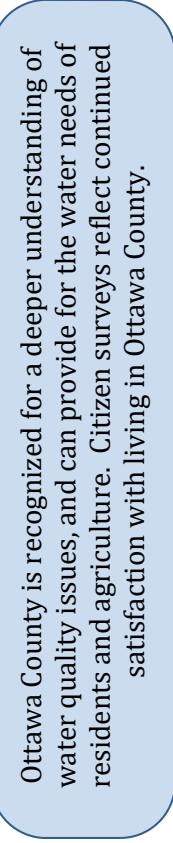
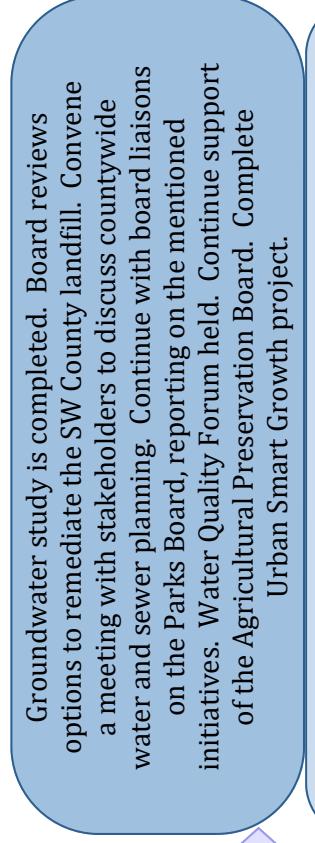
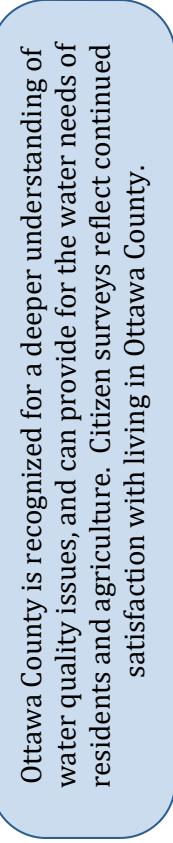
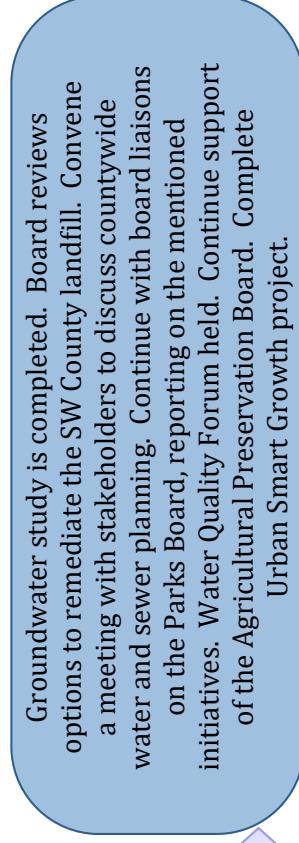
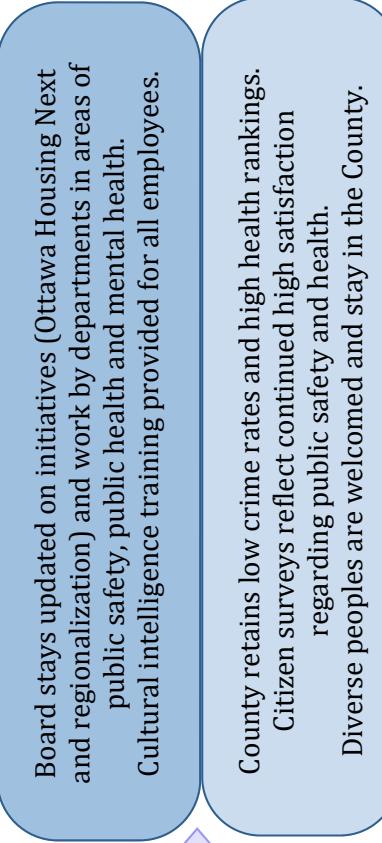
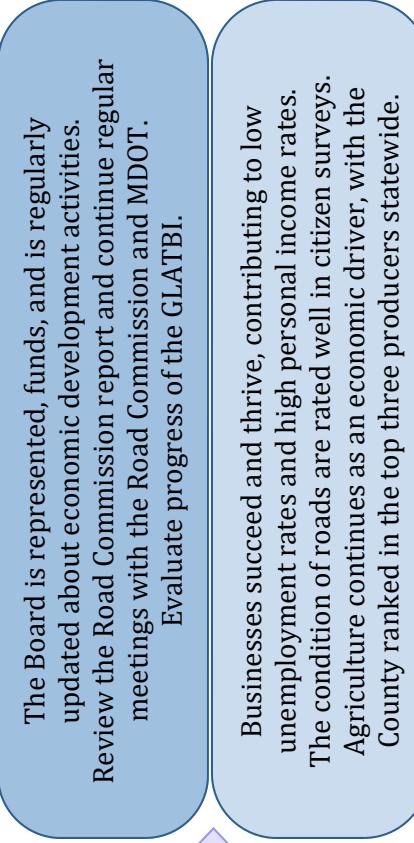
Objective 2: Consider initiatives that contribute to the **social** health and sustainability of the County and its' residents.

- *Continued involvement and support of the coalition examining the challenge of affordable housing, Ottawa Housing Next.*
- *Continue to provide for public safety in the County through the work of the Sheriff, Prosecutor and Courts.*

- *Continue to provide for the health of residents in the County through the Department of Public Health and Community Mental Health.*
- *Continue dialogue with community leaders and develop cultural intelligence training for employees so that the County is part of the solution to develop a globally diverse workforce in our community.*

Objective 3: Consider initiatives that contribute to the **environmental** health and sustainability of the County and its' residents.

- *Complete the next phase of the groundwater resources study.*
- *Evaluate next steps with the Southwest Ottawa County landfill.*
- *Convene stakeholders to continue discussions about countywide water and sewer planning.*
- *Continue to support the work of the Parks and Recreation Commission, including; their upcoming millage renewal efforts, the investigation of a Parks Foundation.*
- *Continue efforts related to water quality and beach sand quality.*
- *Continued support of the Agricultural Preservation Board.*
- *Complete Urban Smart Growth demonstration project.*



WHAT DO WE WANT TO DO?

HOW WILL WE KNOW OUR ACTIONS WERE EFFECTIVE?

GOAL 4: TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE THE COUNTY'S ORGANIZATION AND SERVICES.

- Objective 1:** Conduct activities and maintain systems to **continuously improve** to gain efficiencies and improve effectiveness.

 - Continue and enhance the “4 C’s” initiative.
 - Develop and incorporate systems of creativity (*continuous improvement and innovation*) for all employees.
 - Complete facilities projects, including: improving the appearance of landscape maintenance and the facilities master plan.
 - Evaluate possibilities of joint and/or contracted maintenance between Parks and County facilities.

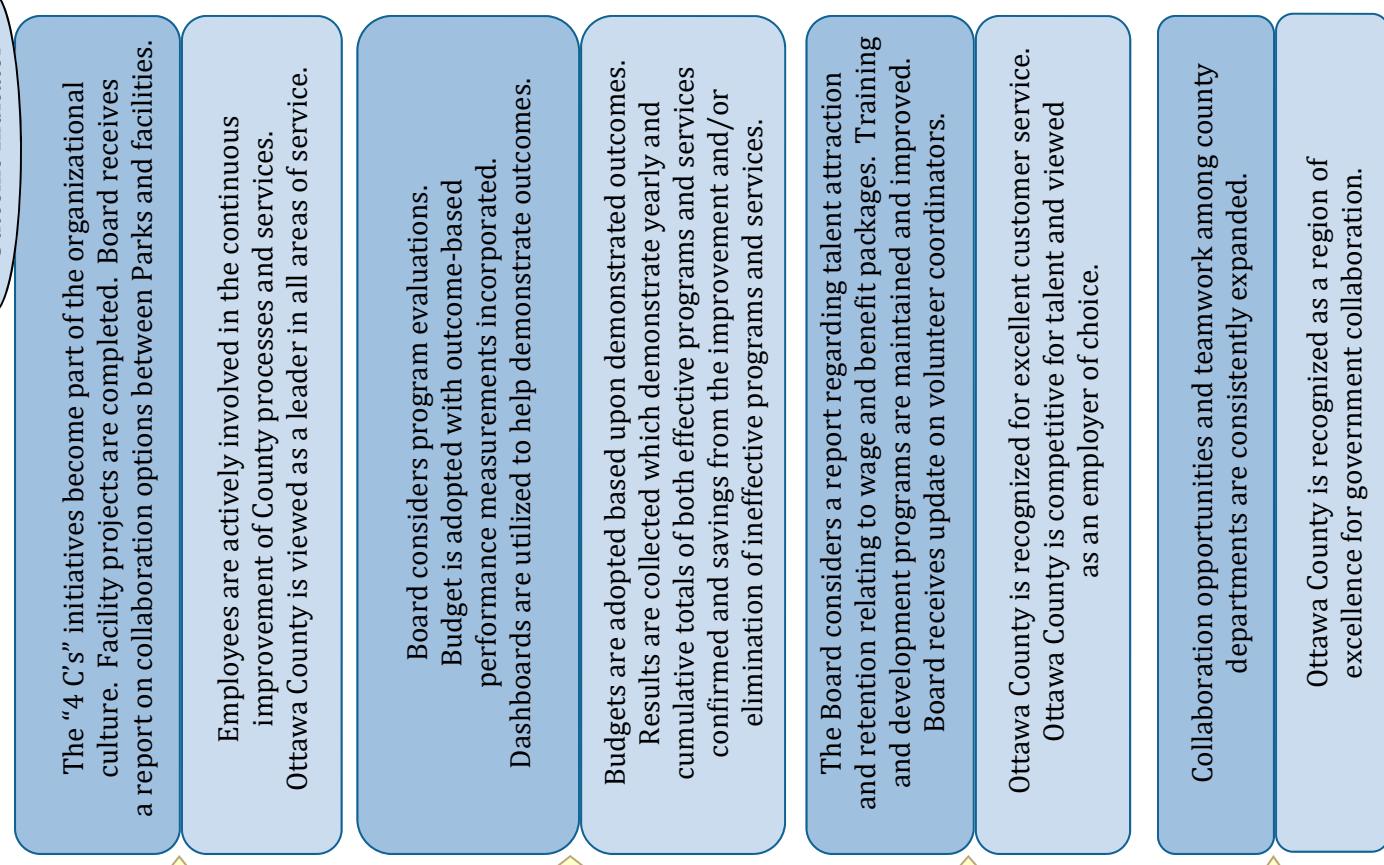
- Objective 2:** Continue to perform program evaluations and implement outcome-based performance measurement systems.

 - Conduct organizational efficiency/structure reviews and program evaluations, including:
 - Road Commission memorandum of understanding review
 - Regional Transit Study
 - County campground
 - Others as needed
 - Continue to improve performance measurement systems and benchmarks relative to budgeted resources.
 - Continue to maintain and improve dashboards and other reports to increase transparency and demonstrate outcomes.

- Objective 3:** Maintain and expand investments in the **human resources** and talent of the organization.

 - *Board discussion about options to attract and retain talent relating to competitive wages and benefit packages.*
 - *Continue the investment in employee training and development through GOLD training program and tuition reimbursement.*
 - *Continue to development tools and resources to hire, train and promote “the right person on the right seat of the bus”.*
 - *Consider expanded use of volunteer coordinators in departments.*

- **Objective 4:** Examine opportunities for increased **cooperation and collaboration** with local government and other partners.
 - *Examine and evaluate possibilities for collaboration on services and make cost-effective services available to units of government.*
 - *Continue to improve culture of collaboration and teamwork among county departments/agencies/courts.*



ASSIGNED RESOURCES AND DEADLINES

Once objectives, deliverables and outputs have been established, it is important to assign deadlines and resources to ensure that the plan activities are completed.

Ottawa County Board of Commissioners
Business Plan: Deadlines and Resources

	Projected Completion	Resources Assigned
Goal 1: To Maintain and Improve the Strong Financial Position of the County.		
Objective 1: Maintain and improve current processes and implement new strategies to retain a balanced budget.		
Board receives financial information in a timely fashion in order to adopt and monitor the budget.	9/27/16	Administrator, Fiscal Services
Board reviews information on the financing tools, including the Insurance Authority.	9/27/16	Administrator, Fiscal Services
Board reviews information and strategies regarding the cost of health benefits and pension/retiree health liabilities.	9/27/16	Administrator, Fiscal Services, Human Resources
Board reviews the Capital Improvement Plan, developing a funding strategy for future facility and equipment needs.	9/27/16	Administrator, Fiscal Services, Facilities
Objective 2: Maintain and improve the financial position of the County through legislative advocacy.		
Clear legislative position statements are produced and made available for use by Commissioners, staff and the public.	Ongoing	Administrator
Staff and lobbyist provide regular updates to the Board.	Ongoing	Administrator
Objective 3: Maintain or improve bond credit ratings.		
Board adopts a balanced budget.	9/27/16	Administrator, Fiscal Services
Communicate with bond rating agencies as scheduled.	Ongoing	Administrator, Fiscal Services
Goal 2: To Maintain and Enhance Communication with Citizens, Employees, & other Stakeholders.		
Objective 1: Regularly review and update communication strategies that guide the work of the County in this goal area.		
Board is regularly updated on communication strategies.	Ongoing	Administrator
Board approves a rebranding project.	8/1/17	Administrator
Objective 2: Maximize communication with citizens.		
Board regularly receives talking points.	Ongoing	Administrator
Regularly evaluate work and metrics on social media initiatives, GovDelivery and www.miOttawa.org .	Ongoing	Administrator, IT
Continue focus on improving local media coverage.	Ongoing	Administrator
Provide event specific information as needed.	Ongoing	Administrator
Objective 3: Continue to develop and implement methods of communicating with employees.		
Administration maintains consistency with effective means of communication with employees.	Ongoing	Administrator, Administration Departments
Objective 4: Evaluate communication with other key stakeholders.		
Board regularly receives a calendar of community events.	Ongoing	Administrator
Regularly communicate with local units of government.	Ongoing	Administrator
Support and participate in sponsoring the M-231 run.	10/31/16	Administrator

Ottawa County Board of Commissioners
Business Plan: Deadlines and Resources

	Projected Completion	Resources Assigned
Goal 3: To Contribute to the Long-Term Economic, Social and Environmental Health of the County.		
Objective 1 : Consider initiatives that contribute to the economic health and sustainability of the County and its' residents.		
The Board is represented, funds, and is regularly updated about economic development activities.	Ongoing	Administrator, Planning
Review the Road Commission report and continue meetings with the Road Commission and MDOT.	Ongoing	Board, Administrator
Evaluate progress of the Great Lakes Agricultural Technology Business Incubator (GLATBI).	Ongoing	Planning
Objective 2 : Consider initiatives that contribute to the social health and sustainability of the County and its' residents.		
Board stays updated on initiatives (Ottawa Housing Next and regionalization) and work by departments in areas of public safety, public health and mental health.	Ongoing	Administrator, Sheriff, Courts, Prosecutor, Public Health and Community Mental Health
Cultural intelligence training provided for all employees.	12/31/16	Human Resources
Objective 3 : Consider initiatives that contribute to the environmental health and sustainability of the County and its' residents.		
Groundwater study is completed.	8/31/17	Planning
Board reviews options to remediate the Southwest Ottawa County landfill.	12/31/16	Administrator, Public Health, Public Utilities
Convene a meeting with stakeholders to discuss countywide water and sewer planning.	12/31/16	Administrator, Public Health, Public Utilities
Continue with board liaisons on the Parks Board, reporting on the mentioned initiatives.	Ongoing	Parks
Water Quality Forum held.	11/31/16	Administrator, Parks, MSU Ext., Public Health
Continue support of the Agricultural Preservation Board.	Ongoing	Planning
Complete Urban Smart Growth project.	5/1/17	Planning
Goal 4: To Continually Improve the County's Organization and Services.		
Objective 1 : Conduct activities and maintain systems to continuously improve to gain efficiencies and improve effectiveness.		
The "4 C's" initiatives become part of the organizational culture.	Ongoing	Administrator, Human Resources
Facility projects are completed.	10/1/16	Facilities
Board receives a report on collaboration options between Parks and facilities.	10/1/16	Administrator, Parks, Facilities
Objective 2: Continue to perform program evaluations and implement outcome-based performance measurement systems.		
Board receives progress updates on the memorandum of understanding with the Road Commission.	Ongoing	Administrator, Planning
Board considers conducting another Regional Transit Study.	7/1/17	Planning
Board considers report on trail maintenance.	4/1/17	Administrator, Parks, Planning
Board receives update from Parks on the feasibility of a County campground.	12/31/16	Parks
Board considers report on the Sobriety/Drug Courts.	12/31/16	Administrator, Planning, Courts
Budget is adopted with outcome-based performance measurements incorporated.	9/27/16	Administrator, Fiscal Services, Planning
Dashboards are utilized to help demonstrate outcomes.	Ongoing	Administrator, Planning
Objective 3 : Maintain and expand investments in the human resources and talent of the organization.		
The Board considers a report regarding talent attraction and retention relating to wage/benefit packages.	11/1/16	Administrator, Human Resources
Training and development programs are maintained and improved.	Ongoing	Human Resources
Board receives update on volunteer coordinators.	11/1/16	Administrator, Human Resources
Objective 4: Examine opportunities for increased cooperation and collaboration with local government and other partners.		
Collaboration opportunities and teamwork among county departments are consistently expanded.	Ongoing	Administrator, All Departments

