

ANNUAL REPORT

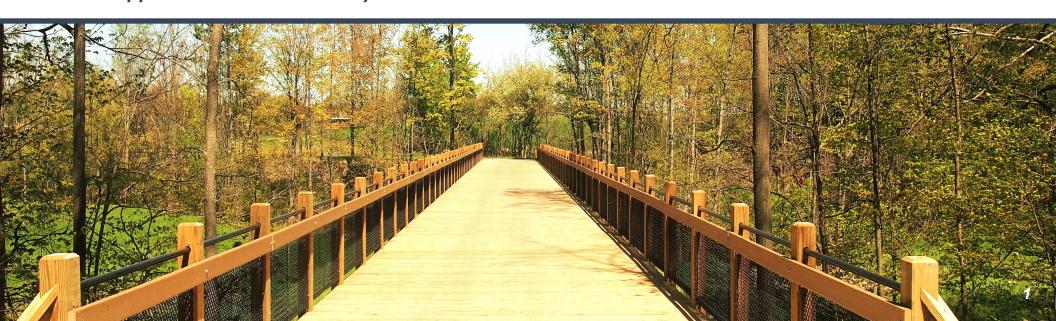
DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGIC IMPACT

2023



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Letter from the Director —

Dear Ottawa County residents,

For many, 2023 has been a year of returning to 'normal' following a few less-than-conventional years. Yet here in Strategic Impact, no matter the year, "normal" isn't in our vocabulary. We are always looking at programs and projects that serve the greater good with a dynamic perspective because the issues that come across our desks require either a rapid response or intense consideration for long-term planning.

I am extremely proud of our team for quickly analyzing opportunities and implementing them with patience and precision. This year the County Clerk approached our team for help with a rapidly moving issue, the passage of Ballot Proposal 22-2, implementing early voting. The Clerk's Office did a phenomenal job of tracking the required changes and considering the development of a comprehensive, countywide plan to ensure our entire community can follow the new statutory requirements while balancing staff capacity and fiscal responsibility. Our cost analysis helped secure agreements with every municipality and demonstrate the real value proposition. We are fortunate to be a part of such sweeping collaboration.

We are continuing to prepare evidence-based research and recommendations to improve the County's efficiency, cost effectiveness, and responsibility for years to come. One particular focus area with a lot of on-going research is the Groundwater Sustainability Initiative. (continued on next page)







Letter from the Director —

Our land use planning staff continues to make strides addressing huge gaps in education about conservation resources related to groundwater. Our office implemented a demonstration project this year installing native plants throughout the Fillmore Complex grounds. We will be adding educational signage on the benefits of native landscaping to reduce water usage, and how residents can implement these changes themselves. I encourage you to swing by our offices this spring and summer to see the beautiful types of native flowers and grasses.

One of our most exciting projects this year was the culmination of much forethought and groundwork. This December the Board of Commissioners voted to approve contracts with 123NET and Tilson Infrastructure to expand highspeed broadband internet access to the entirety of Ottawa County over the next few years. I could not be more proud of all those involved working with community members currently struggling with no quality internet access, collecting data to truly understand our gaps in service, and the creation of a plan to leverage \$25M to bring us into the 21st century. The plethora of positive impacts to Ottawa County, and its residents, business owners, farmers, students, and visitors will endure for decades to come.

Alongside these grand undertakings, the Department of Strategic Impact and I have been delighted to add two new staff members, Joe Pierce as Special Projects Coordinator and Lexie Kasper as Project Support Specialist. Our robust team is uniquely positioned with passionate individuals ready to serve our community.

In 2024 we will continue to keep our attention on progress, addressing our communities needs, and planning for the prosperous future of Ottawa County.

-Paul Sachs, Department of Strategic Impact Director

Our Expert Team



Paul Sachs
Director



Pamela
Vanden Heuvel
Administrative Assistant



Becky Huttenga
Economic Development
Coordinator



Julie Lamer
Farmland Preservation
Analyst



Stephanie Oesch Research & Data Analyst



Matt Chappuies
Land Use Coordinator



Andrew Roszkowski Land Use Specialist



Kylie Vosburg
Land Use Specialist



Joe Pierce
Special Projects
Coordinator



Lexie Kasper
Project Support
Specialist

Our Focus Areas



Evaluation, Statistics, and Research

Improve organizational performance by collecting and analyzing data and presenting informed solutions.

Land Use Planning

Collaboratively ensure wise usage of the County's finite space, while accounting for many conflicting interests.

Economic Development

Support economic growth by leveraging available programs to guide both development and preservation.

Statistics)

Overview

The Evaluation, Statistics, and Research (ESR) focus area of the Department of Strategic Impact has, as the name suggests, three main areas of work:

Evaluation:
Staff perform
evaluation projects for
various Ottawa
County departments,
local units of
government, and other
local organizations

Statistics:

Staff maintain and update databases, dashboards, and reports containing various Ottawa County statistics, including unemployment, building permits, mileage rates, and more

Research:

Staff research best practices, facilitate strategic planning, and assist Ottawa County with various research projects

ESR work helps residents stay informed about Ottawa County, identifies strengths and weaknesses in County programs, and finds opportunities for improvement to work towards a strong future for Ottawa County. The majority of ESR's projects are done at the request of other Ottawa County departments, local units of government, residents, and local organizations—including some fee-for-service projects.

Program Highlights

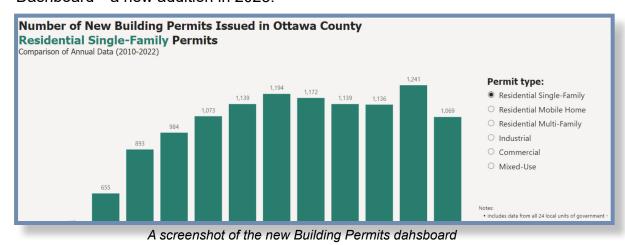
Performance Outlines

As part of the annual Performance Outline process, DSI staff updated, distributed, and collected outlines for each County department that include information on each department's description, mission, primary goals, and objectives, with the central part of each outline being outcome measures specific to each department's goals and objectives. Data from the past year for each of these outcomes is included, and departments also look ahead by providing estimated future data for these measures.

Once outlines are updated, completed, and reviewed, they are sent to Fiscal Services. These outlines are included in Ottawa County's annual budget book, as they are required for the County to achieve the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association.

County Statistics and Data Requests

Over the past year, DSI staff have regularly updated a variety of County statistics. Some of these include population estimates, unemployment numbers, building permits, cost of living and more. Staff are also at work on making these statistics more accessible through online dashboards, including the Building Permits Dashboard—a new addition in 2023.



Performance Dashboard

In 2023, DSI staff worked to complete an update to Ottawa County's Performance Dashboard. This dashboard fulfills the requirement for the County Incentive Program from the Michigan Department of Treasury, and it includes statistics on Ottawa County's economy, health, education, government, public safety and environment.

Up to this point, the Performance
Dashboard was a PDF document that
was updated once a year. The new
dashboard will be online and interactive.
This will make it more accessible and
more easily navigable. It also allows for
more regular data updates throughout
the year. Staff are currently working to
finalize the new dashboard and hope to
have it available soon.













Program Highlights

Volunteers in Public Service - Assessment

The Volunteers in Public Service (VIPS) program assists the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office with vehicle transfers, home security checks, handicapped parking enforcement, processing abandoned vehicles, and provides courtesy transportation to inmates released from the jail who need a ride back to their communities.

In 2023, DSI staff continued to partner with the Sheriff's Office by assessing the time and miles traveled by the volunteers for each activity. This information was compiled in the 2022 VIPS Annual Statistics report early in the year, and staff will log and process volunteer information in preparation for the 2023 report to be completed early next year.





The Food Club & Opportunity Hub

Food Club – 12-Month Evaluation

In late 2021 Community Action House (CAH) opened the Food Club & Opportunity Hub to serve low-income community members. Designed to bridge the gap between a food pantry and a grocery store, members pay a small monthly fee to receive points for shopping in a grocery store setting.

DSI staff, who have been involved with the project since before the Food Club opened its doors, continued to meet with and collaborate with CAH staff to review data collection and survey results. In summer, DSI staff received the data collected over the initial 12 months of operation, which was used to create a 12-month evaluation of the Food Club & Opportunity Hub. This evaluation used survey results from members to compare food consumption and health from entry, 6 months, and 12 months of membership, as well as additional feedback from members on the welcoming nature and helpfulness of the Food Club. This fee-for-service project will continue into the first half of 2024 with a planned 16-month evaluation of the Food Club.

Program Highlights

Early, In-Person Voting Strategic Planning

With the passing of 2022 Michigan Proposal 2, the Right to Voting Policies Amendment, the County Clerk's Office collaborated with local clerks across Ottawa County to develop a centralized plan for early, in-person voting across the County.

In 2023, DSI staff assisted the County Clerk's Office with initial strategic planning sessions relating to the implementation of four new early, in-person voting sites that meet the new legislative requirements. These sessions included brainstorming sessions and creating estimated, potential budgets for the proposed sites. Staff also worked with the Clerk's Office and Fiscal Services to develop documents showing the cost-savings of implementing these voting sites in Ottawa County. The project was approved by the Board of Commissioners in September and includes all 23 County local units of government, saving tax payer money and maintaining election integrity.

Clerk Workflow and Staffing Study

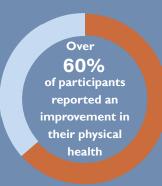
In 2023, DSI staff began work with the County Clerk's Office to examine workflows and job processes ahead of the new Family Justice Center opening. Current plans include surveying staff members and conducting focus groups into 2024 in order to review workflow effectiveness and staffing levels.

Step It Up! - Evaluation and Data Collection

Step It Up! is a free, eight-week exercise challenge offered each spring to residents that includes group walks, an adventure series, weekly strength training, healthy eating tips, and provides accountability with physical activity, goal setting, and reporting. The goal of this program is to get community members active, visiting new parks, exercising outdoors more, and improving their overall health.

In 2023, DSI staff updated participant survey questions prior to the start of the program. Once the program was complete, staff completed an annual evaluation report. This evaluation analyzed pre- and post-program participant data and compiled the results. Some of the highlights from this year's program include over 60% of participants reporting an improvement in their physical health and over 70% reporting an improvement in their mental health.







Overview

The Land Use Planning team works to address large scale, complex problems that often cross local jurisdictional boundaries. These problems typically don't have a one size fits all solution, and the involvement of Local Units of Government (LUGs) is essential to maximizing available capacity to properly address emerging challenges. When one of these regional issues arises, the planning team can gather LUGs and stakeholders to collect and assess regional data and drive informed decision making.

In addition, the County planning team helps to educate and train local planning officials—who are often not professional planners—to equip them with the knowledge and power to be as impactful as possible when making decisions for their local communities. It is extremely important for these local leaders to be informed in how their decisions impact not just the local character of their communities, but also the character of the County as a whole.







Coordinate Stakeholders and LUGs

Collect and Assess Regional Data Educate Local Planning Officials Drive Informed Decision Making

Program Highlights

Ottawa County Housing Commission

In mid 2023 DSI staff began to identify opportunities for continuing to address housing needs across the region. Potential ideas include, but are not limited to, collecting data for improved understanding of housing needs for disabled persons, scheduling focus groups to become better informed on challenges experienced in the local housing-space, researching barriers/challenges involving existing housing strategies, policies, and programming, engaging in legislative advocacy as necessary, and enhancing countywide/regional data-sharing with local governments as a means to help support effective land planning and local zoning decisions.

Revolving Loan Fund - Workforce Housing

Ottawa County capitalized on a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) dedicated to help meet workforce housing needs with a \$10M investment in late 2022. The Workforce Housing RLF is intended to support housing investments which serve renter households earning at or below 80% of the Ottawa County Area Median Income and owner households earning at or below 100% of the Area Median Income. At the end of the 20-year investment term, the County can receive the funds back or choose to reinvest into the fund again.

The RLF is managed and administered by IFF, a non-profit community development financial institution with offices in Grand Rapids, MI. Housing Next was contracted by the County (for a 2-year term) to help support the County Housing Commission in facilitating discussions with community developers and reviewing projects for potential investment by the Fund based on priorities set by the Housing Commission. Housing Next and IFF, along with support by DSI staff, have been working to develop a transparent reporting process to clearly showcase how each stage of the loan process works and is operating, as well as reporting on, fundable projects. An online, publicly visible dashboard is also being developed by IFF to help support these reporting needs with respect to achievements and ongoing happenings associated with the Fund.

Jurisdictional Expansion of Grand Rapids Housing Commission

In early 2023, the Ottawa County Housing Commission (OCHC) and DSI worked to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) for their planned expansion into Ottawa County. The MOU ensures equal opportunities for Kent and Ottawa residents in the distribution of Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), a program OCHC does not have the authority to operate. The DSI is also working to support collaborative opportunities between local non-profit housing partners and the GRHC to help make informed decisions related to attainable housing needs across the region.

Program Highlights



Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Ottawa County's bedrock groundwater aquifer is facing significant issues in water quantity and quality. To sustain this limited resource, the Groundwater Board and DSI planners gathered stakeholders, scientists and local leaders to understand and approach the issue from the appropriate regional perspective. The DSI also secured a state grant for this initiative that has funded the collection of geographic and hydrologic data across the County.

In 2023, staff made significant progress in the ongoing efforts to enhance educational outreach for the Groundwater Sustainability Initiative. Following the July 2023 update, DSI staff are pleased to announce contracts with two exceptional organizations to spearhead multimedia and marketing initiatives. The campaign will utilize various channels, including digital marketing strategies, strategically placed billboards, engaging gas station videos, and the creation of a compelling campaign slogan. Through these efforts, DSI staff aim to fostering a broader understanding of groundwater sustainability.

Michigan State University Extension (MSUe) Citizen Planner Program

Led by esteemed instructors like Tyler Augst, Ryan Coffey, Mary Reilly, and Julie Pioch, this six-week course provided essential knowledge to locally appointed and elected planning officials, along with residents, and those in related professional fields. Throughout the program, participants engaged in sessions covering crucial topics, such as understanding the planning and zoning context, planning for the future, implementing zoning plans, making informed zoning decisions, employing innovative planning and zoning strategies, and successfully fulfilling leadership roles.



This training holds significant importance for local leaders as it equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary for informed decision-making in the realm of planning and zoning. By recognizing the importance of master plans participants are better prepared to contribute strategically to the long-term development of Ottawa County communities. During this program, 8 out of 9 participants earned their Citizen Planner Certificate of Completion. In addition, 100% of evalution repondents reported increased understanding of state and federal laws, as well as the legal responsibilities and limitations of their role.

Program Highlights



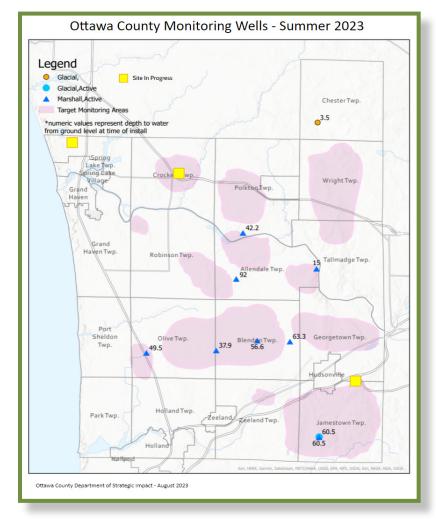
Native Landscaping Demonstration Project

A significant amount of groundwater is consumed to maintain traditional turf-style landscapes by residents and businesses on wells. Due to strains on Ottawa County's Marshall Sandstone aquifer, the County has decided to lead by example to transform the turf grass environment on select County-owned facilities to water-conscious landscapes. By taking the initiative to move away from traditional turf lawns, the County hopes to bring more awareness to the groundwater issue and encourage businesses and residents to follow suit.

In the first year the County will save \$16,000 in fuel and 5.1 million gallons of water from the reduction in watering, mowing, and additional maintenance associated with turf grass. After 15 years, the accumulated savings will be more than \$240,000 and 76.5 million gallons of water.

Groundwater Monitoring

The DSI team works with stakeholders to identify locations for groundwater monitoring well installlations. This year, staff drilled and installed equipment at three sites in Blendon Township and three sites across the County with the Michigan Geological Survey. Next year staff will add more sites and utilize the data for advanced modeling to assit with local decision making.



Program Highlights

Connecting Farmers to Land

The MiFarmLink project that launched in Ottawa County in 2020 continues to gain traction statewide under the leadership of Washtenaw County Conservation District with the support from an advisory committee of industry professionals. This project brought 79 farmers, prospective farmers, and service providers together to learn about succession planning, listed 17 farm properties on its land linking website and linked three of those, and connected 17 other farmers with resources they needed. The land link website, mifarmlink.org, had close to 7,000 visitors in 2023 alone. DSI looks forward to seeing more Ottawa County farmland owners list their properties here in the future, making them more accessible to new and beginning farmers struggling to start or expand their operations.

Preserving Land for Future Generations

2023 has been a busy year for farmland preservation staff. In addition to the annual fundraiser and community building event, Farms are the Tapas, staff have worked diligently toward preserving five different properties in various stages of the preservation process. Two properties are in Zeeland Township, and Chester, Wright, and Olive Townships each have one property.

406 total acres are to be preserved, doubling Ottawa County's number of preserved acres under its Farmland Preservation Program. With the acres already preserved, as well as the acres preserved by the state, 1,627 acres of land will always be available to grow food for the residents of Ottawa County and beyond.

Farms are the Tapas

For the seventh-annual fundraising dinner and silent auction, the Red Shed was filed with nearly 150 people. County staff developed a short drone video highlighting six preserved Ottawa County farms and the next six farmland properties to be preserved. The event also featured a short video explaining the Otawa County Purchasing of Development Rights program works. Holy Smokers BBQ of Holland took home the Harvest Knife Award, competing alongside The Beard and Gal of Holland, Sandy Point Beach House of Port Sheldon, and The Farmhouse of Zeeland. Chefs incorporated locally produced ingredients to make tapas-style dishes uniquely their own.

As guests enjoyed all the fantastic dishes, the silent auction bidding was in full swing with 12 unique packages which ultimately pulled in a record \$6,060. Including auction items, sponsor support, and ticket sales, nearly \$23,000 was raised for the Farmland Preservation Program.



Farmland Preservation Analyst Julie Lamer with Holy Smokers BBQ owner Kyle Segar



Overview

Economic development staff deliver statutorily authorized programs, work to identify and fill service gaps throughout the County, and foster collaboration between the Department and the two economic development organizations that serve the County; Lakeshore Advantage and The Chamber of Grand Haven, Spring Lake, and Ferrysburg. This keeps businesses from all sectors thriving, leads to good jobs and competitive wages for residents, and strong tax revenues for effective County services.









In 2024, staff look forward to new opportunities that will be available to the County, including:

Recently enacted
'Housing Tax Increment
Financing' legislative
changes, allowing
brownfield tax increment
financing to be used to
help eligible housing
development projects.

Urban County status
assessment, which will
assess potential benefits
and impacts of accepting
'entitlement' status for
Community Development
Block Grant funding from
the Department of
Housing and Urban
Development.

Land Transfer
Navigator Program,
a four-year project
geared toward helping
farmers put a
succession plan in
place for their
operations.

Program Highlights

Helping Communities Address Blight

DSI staff have helped reinvent the Ottawa County Land Bank Authority (OCLBA) thanks to the Blight Elimination Program (BEP). The BEP launched in 2022, and is run by the Michigan State Land Bank Authority. This program empowers local land banks to help demolish and stabilize unsafe structures. The OCLBA and DSI have distributed \$512,500 in four communities since late 2022.



A before and after example of a project in Zeeland

Revitalizing Contaminated Properties

September 2023 marked the end of the County's second Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield Assessment grant project. This is an important tool in identifying and planning for cleanup and remediation of contaminated properties. During this three year, \$300,000 project, preliminary final report numbers show that the Ottawa County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority provided support for 56 environmental assessments and plans for 30 properties in 11 local units across the County. Impacts and/or projected impacts from the redevelopment of those sites will be released in early 2024. The County applied for a third round of EPA Brownfield Assessment grant funding in November 2023. Award announcements are expected in spring of 2024. Until the next EPA grant is awarded, the County established the locally led Brownfield Incentive Program (BIP) in order to help offset some of the financial burden of assessing contaminated properties. The BIP has assisted 10 projects in six communities thus far.

Program Highlights

Supporting Energy Efficient Development

The Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program helps property owners secure loans for energy efficient improvements. PACE loans, with terms of up to 25 years, are secured by attaching a voluntary special assessment to the property upon which the improvements were made.

In 2023, the DSI helped a local non-profit use PACE to make energy efficient improvements to their 130,000 square foot building in Holland Township. This PACE project is expected to save 11,435,475 kWh of electricity, 11,152,050 gallons of water and 9,966 metric tons of CO2 over the term of the project!



PACE project location Family Church Grace Chapel



J.H. Campbell Closure Update

Planning for the redevelopment of the J.H. Campbell plant site in Port Sheldon Township continues. Earlier this year Consumers Energy released more information regarding the closure timelines, clean energy transition, and the results of the Future Use Study with Percheron, Saxum, and CBRE. After analyzing that report, Ottawa County Parks began assessing their goals for the Pigeon River Greenway, the corridor from central Ottawa County to Lake Michigan along the Pigeon River which traverses the Consumers property. In 2024 Port Sheldon Township will select a consultant to support them in creating an Economic Resiliency Response Plan and Master Land Use Plan Update, through funding from an Economic Development Administration grant, that will guide Port Sheldon in responsibly navigating the plant closure and redevelopment. Planning support from DSI staff will remain available to support efforts to redevelop the site in a way that encourages protection of the natural features and facilitates robust economic development.

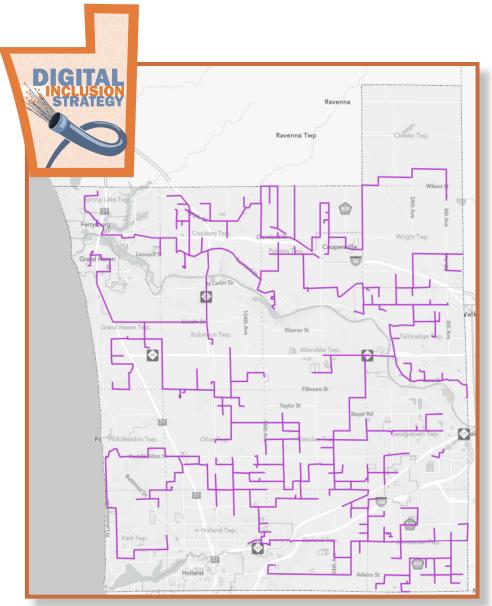
Program Highlights

Digital Inclusion Strategy

DSI staff are excited to celebrate a strong step forward for Ottawa County's Broadband Strategy. This December the Board of Commissioners voted to finalize Public-Private Partnerships with 123NET and Tilson Infrastructure, allowing 123NET to accept an award of \$14 million in Realizing Opportunities with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN) grant funding. The State of Michigan announced 123NET's eligibility with the second round of funding earlier this fall.

In conjunction with \$7.5 million in funding from Ottawa County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and \$3.5 million in 123NET's private capital, the upcoming project will allow the construction of nearly 400 miles of new fiber in the County, further providing internet access to 10,000 residents and businesses. The partnership with Tilson Infrastructure allows the company to start assessing opportunities for enhanced fixed-wireless coverage countywide and ultimately to construct new towers in critical locations which will be supported with new fiber infrastructure deployed by 123NET. Both partnership agreements include provisions for revenue share direct to Ottawa County and for open access to encourage healthy competition of service providers.

Construction to this expanded network is projected to start in 2024. Staff will continue to support the project and stay aware of new and emerging technologies to support Ottawa County's growth and development.



Preliminary fiber expansion map



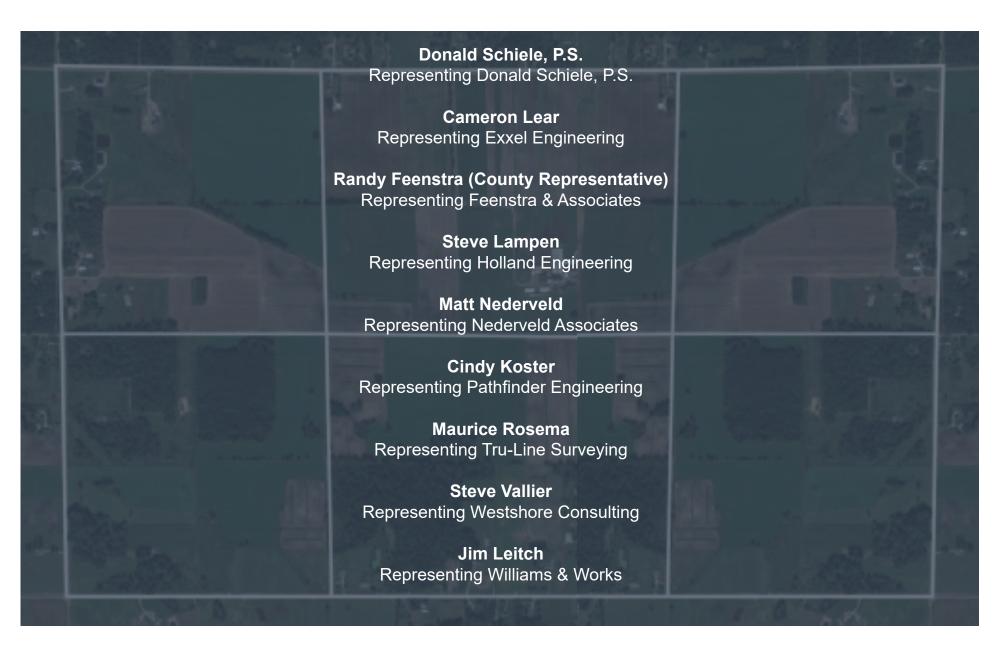
Appendix A

Ottawa County Housing Commission (2023)



Appendix B

Ottawa County Remonumentation Peer Group (2023)



Appendix C

Ottawa County Agricultural Preservation Board (2023)

Josh Hucul, Chair

Representing Real Estate, Land Development Term Expires 12/31/2025

Kelly Goward, Vice Chair

Representing Local Conservation Term Expires 12/31/2024

Nathan Pyle, Secretary

Representing Agriculture Term Expires 12/31/2024

Vacant

Youth (Ad-Hoc)

Allison Miedema

County Commissioner, Ottawa County Term Expires 12/31/2024

Michael Bronkema

Agricultural Producer Term Expires 12/31/2024

Paul Windemuller

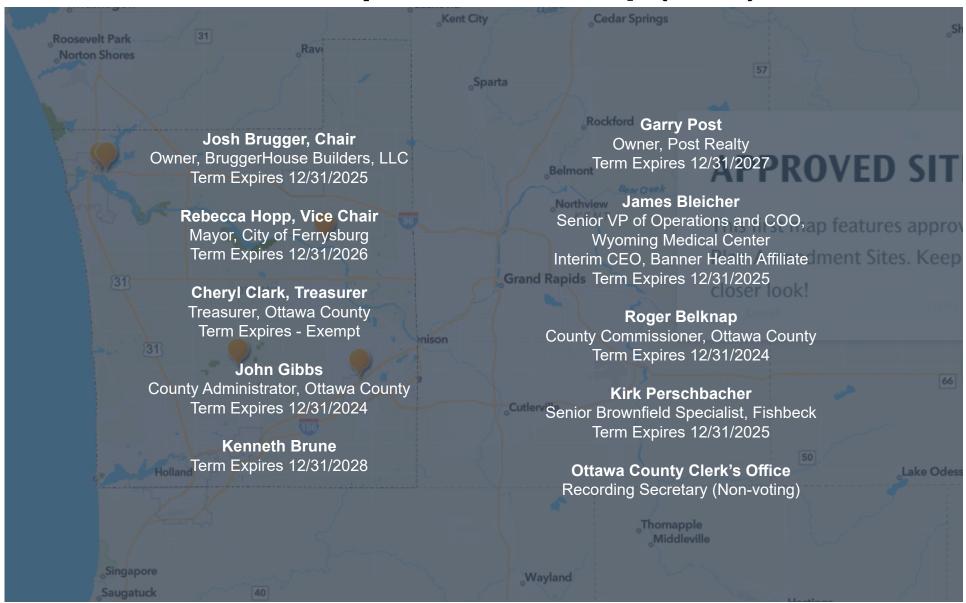
Representing Agriculture Term Expires 12/31/2025

Lukas Hill

Representing Township Government Term Expires 12/31/2025

Appendix D

— Ottawa County Brownfield — Redevelopment Authority (2023)



Appendix E

Ottawa County Groundwater Board (2023)

Roger Belknap, Chair

County Commissioner, Ottawa County Term Expires 12/31/2024

Adam Elenbass, Vice Chair

Supervisor, Allendale Charter Township Term Expires 12/31/2026

Sylvia Rhodea

County Commissioner, Ottawa County
Term Expires 12/31/2024

Frank Johnson

Supervisor, Robinson Township Term Expires 12/31/2024

Mark Baker

Aquatic Toxicology Lab Director, ALS Environmental Term Expires 12/31/2026

Patrick Staskiewicz, P.E.

Public Utilities Director,
Ottawa County Road Commission
Term Expires 12/31/2024

John Truscott

CEO, Truscott Rossman Term Expires 12/31/2024

Dave Kraker

Retired, Kent County Environmental Health Term Expires 12/31/2024

Henry Werksma

Owner, Fruit Farm Retired, Kinectrics Term Expires 12/31/2025

John A. Yellich, M.S.

Director, Michigan Geological Survey Term Expires 12/31/2024

Lee Machiela

Driller/Owner, DeWind Well Drilling Term Expires 12/31/2026

Alex Svoboda

Project Manager RCPP, Ottawa Conservation District Term Expires 12/31/2026

Dale Buist

Owner, Countryside Greenhouse Term Expires 12/31/2024

Carrie Rivette

Senior Environmental Engineer, SHE of Michigan LLC Term Expires 12/31/2026

Angela Brown

Director of Facilities Management,
Ottawa Area Intermediate School District
Term Expires 12/31/2023

Dale Zahn

CEO, West Michigan Lakeshore
Association of Realtors
Term Expires 12/31/2024

Jerry Gertman

Owner, Ottawa Station Farms Term Expires 12/31/2025

Joe Bush, Ad-Hoc

Water Resources Commissioner

DEPARTMENT OF

STRATEGIC IMPACT

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