OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Strategic Plan and 2016 Business Plan
OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Back Row (Left to Right): Donald G. Dsselkoen - 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;
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.
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 the **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 the **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 the **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 the **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 the **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 the **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.
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 it 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
- Health care systems
- Environmentally sound
- Work ethic and integrity
- Recreational opportunities, park system including state parks
- Facilities
- Economically diverse, business community
- Strong school systems, including higher education
- Good reputation
- Influential with legislators (State/Federal)
- Human services - take care of needs in County
- Communication - use of social media
- 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
- 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 Road Commission

### Weaknesses

- Roads
- 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
- 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

### Opportunities

- Legislation at end of terms/lame duck
  - More proactive
  - Unfunded mandates
- Employee - compensation package stays competitive to retain and attract top-quality employees
- More cooperation/collaboration of services
- Continued/expanded partnerships in economic development
- 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
- Review potential tax reduction annually
- Remaining unfunded legacy costs
- Next phase of M-231
- 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

### Threats

- 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
- Uncertain/volatile economy
- Complacency
- "Unemployables" in citizenry
- Cost of health care
- Water - water resource study outcomes
- Managing growth - maintain open space/agriculture land
- Changes in healthcare systems with Community Mental Health and Public Health
- Lack of affordable housing
- Increase in numbers of Michigan Tax Tribunal appeals
- State regionalization of services and loss of local control
- Millage renewals - funding for items like parks maintenance if renewals fail
- Next phase of M-231
- Lack of infrastructure in growth areas
- Term limits
- Court funding
- Solid waste
- Infrastructure - lead in water issues
- Growth in unfunded mandates
- EPA air quality rules
- Invasive species/fish farms/other threats to sport fishing and related industries
- Expanded fed/state regulations
## 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.

### How will we know our actions were effective?
- Board receives financial information in a timely fashion in order to adopt and monitor the budget.
- Board receives 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.
**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.

**How will we know our actions were effective?**

- Board is regularly updated on communication strategies. Board approves a rebranding project.
- County regularly monitors and evaluates changes in the community and communications to be effective.
- Board regularly receives talking points. Regularly evaluate work and metrics on social media initiatives, GovDelivery and www.miOttawa.org. Continue focus on improving local media coverage. Provide event specific information as needed.
- Indicators in the citizen survey, and metrics from GovDelivery/www.miOttawa.org/social media, reflect increased knowledge of County activities and satisfaction with communication.
- Administration maintains consistency with effective means of communication with employees.
- Employee engagement surveys reflect an increase in overall employee engagement.
- Board regularly receives a calendar of community events. Regularly communicate with local units of government. Support and participate in sponsoring the M-231 run.
- The County has good relationships with local units of government and other entities in the community.
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 Grand River Greenway, park land acquisition review and 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.

**How will we know our actions were effective?**
- The Board is represented, funds, and is regularly updated about economic development activities. Review the Road Commission report and continue regular meetings with the Road Commission and MDOT. Evaluate progress of the GLATBI.
- Businesses succeed and thrive, contributing to low unemployment rates and high personal income rates. The condition of roads are rated well in citizen surveys. Agriculture continues as an economic driver, with the County ranked in the top three producers statewide.
- Board stays updated on initiatives (Ottawa Housing Next and regionalization) and work by departments in areas of public safety, public health and mental health. Cultural intelligence training provided for all employees.
- County retains low crime rates and high health rankings. Citizen surveys reflect continued high satisfaction regarding public safety and health. Diverse peoples are welcomed and stay in the County.
- Groundwater study is completed. Board reviews options to remediate the SW County landfill. Convene a meeting with stakeholders to discuss countywide water and sewer planning. Continue with board liaisons on the Parks Board, reporting on the mentioned initiatives. Water Quality Forum held. Continue support of the Agricultural Preservation Board. Complete Urban Smart Growth project.
- Ottawa County is recognized for a deeper understanding of water quality issues, and can provide for the water needs of residents and agriculture. Citizen surveys reflect continued satisfaction with living in Ottawa County.
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 to perform program evaluations and implement outcome-based performance measurement systems.
- Develop and incorporate systems of creativity (continuous improvement) into county projects.
- Complete facilities maintenance and the facilities master plan.
- Evaluate possibilities of joint and/or contracted maintenance between Parks and County facilities.

Objective 2: Conduct organizational structure reviews and program evaluations, including:
- Road Commission memorandum of understanding review
- Regional Transit Study
- Trail Maintenance
- Sobriety/Drug Courts
- Evaluation of “4 C’s” initiative
- Continue to improve performance measurement systems and benchmark relative to budgeted resources.
- Others as needed

Objective 3: Continue to perform program evaluations and implement outcome-based performance measurement systems.
- Continue to improve performance measurement systems and maintain and improve dashboards and other reports to increase transparency and demonstrate outcomes.
- Continue to perform program evaluations and maintain and improve dashboards and other reports to increase transparency and demonstrate outcomes.

Objective 4: Conduct human resources and maintain and improve the “4 C’s” initiative.
- Conduct and enhance the “4 C’s” initiative.
- Complete facilities maintenance and the facilities master plan.
- Evaluate possibilities of joint and/or contracted maintenance between Parks and County facilities.
- Other as needed

Output Indicator: The “4 C’s” initiative is a part of the organizational culture. Facility projects are completed.

Outcome Indicator:
- County views the “4 C’s” initiative as a leader in all areas of service.
- Facility projects are completed.
- Board receives update on volunteer coordinators.
- Ottawa County is competitive for talent and viewed as an employer of choice.
Once objectives, deliverables and outputs have been established, it is important to assign deadlines and resources to ensure that the plan activities are completed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1: To Maintain and Improve the Strong Financial Position of the County.</th>
<th>Projected Completion</th>
<th>Resources Assigned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1: Maintain and improve current processes and implement new strategies to retain a balanced budget.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Board receives financial information in a timely fashion in order to adopt and monitor the budget.</td>
<td>9/27/16</td>
<td>Administrator, Fiscal Services</td>
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<td>Board reviews information on the financing tools, including the Insurance Authority.</td>
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<td>Board reviews information and strategies regarding the cost of health benefits and pension/retiree health liabilities.</td>
<td>9/27/16</td>
<td>Administrator, Fiscal Services, Human Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board reviews the Capital Improvement Plan, developing a funding strategy for future facility and equipment needs.</td>
<td>9/27/16</td>
<td>Administrator, Fiscal Services, Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 2: Maintain and improve the financial position of the County through legislative advocacy.</strong></td>
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<td>Clear legislative position statements are produced and made available for use by Commissioners, staff and the public.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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<td>Staff and lobbyist provide regular updates to the Board.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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<td><strong>Objective 3: Maintain or improve bond credit ratings.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Board adopts a balanced budget.</td>
<td>9/27/16</td>
<td>Administrator, Fiscal Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate with bond rating agencies as scheduled.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Administrator, Fiscal Services</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 2: To Maintain and Enhance Communication with Citizens, Employees, &amp; other Stakeholders.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Objective 1: Regularly review and update communication strategies that guide the work of the County in this goal area.</strong></td>
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<td>Board is regularly updated on communication strategies.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board approves a rebranding project.</td>
<td>8/1/17</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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<td><strong>Objective 2: Maximize communication with citizens.</strong></td>
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<td>Board regularly receives talking points.</td>
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<td>Regularly evaluate work and metrics on social media initiatives, GovDelivery and <a href="http://www.miOttawa.org">www.miOttawa.org</a>.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Administrator, IT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue focus on improving local media coverage.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide event specific information as needed.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration maintains consistency with effective means of communication with employees.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Administrator, Administration Departments</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 3: Continue to develop and implement methods of communicating with employees.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Board regularly receives a calendar of community events.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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<td>Regularly communicate with local units of government.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support and participate in sponsoring the M-231 run.</td>
<td>10/31/16</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Ottawa County Board of Commissioners
#### Business Plan: Deadlines and Resources

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