

2018

Missaukee County

Strategic Plan

Adopted April 10, 2018



2018 Missaukee County Strategic Plan

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Missaukee County, a rural community in Northwest Lower Michigan with an agricultural-based economy, is contending with changes to its economy, population, and public resources or funding that will impact the services provided by organizations throughout the County—including its County government.

As it looks to its future in the face of these changing conditions, the Missaukee County Board of Commissioners is working to ensure that its decisions make the best use of resources while reflecting the community's priorities and goals. To help guide its decision-making, the County Board has developed the *2018 Missaukee County Strategic Plan*.

A strategic plan is a document that helps an organization or community:

- set priorities
- focus energy and resources
- strengthen operations
- ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals
- assess and adjust activities in response to a changing environment

The Missaukee County Strategic Plan provides clear direction for



the County Board of Commissioners, County Administrator, and County departments. It includes a vision for a vibrant, economically prosperous Missaukee County, and identifies actions Missaukee County's elected and appointed officials can take in partnership with other key stakeholders to make this vision a reality.

Planning Process

The Missaukee County Strategic Plan was developed through a facilitated process, with assistance from Networks Northwest, using stakeholder and County Board input to create a strategic planning consensus.

A stakeholder meeting was held on December 18, 2017, with participation from County staff and

elected officials, business and property owners, and local government officials. Participants learned about current County demographic and economic conditions, County operations, and budgeting, before participating in discussions to identify the County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). County Commissioners used stakeholder input to drive the development of a mission, vision, strategic focus areas, and goals, at working meetings held in January, February, and March 2018.

Current Community Conditions

As Missaukee County plans for the future, it's important to identify and understand longer-term trends: population and economic changes have immediate consequences on budgeting and service demands at all levels of government, and for all types of service providers.

Input from County stakeholders identified a number of priority community issues that will drive decisions about resources and services in Missaukee County, including workforce housing, population changes impacting the labor force, transportation, and jobs.

Population

Missaukee County's population, like Michigan's as a whole, is slightly declining: between 2005-2015, the County's population dropped by about 1% (171 people), to a 2015 population of 15,099. Northwest Michigan's population, meanwhile, grew by



about 5% during that time period, while nationwide growth was about 9%.

Much of the County's population loss has been in younger age groups, as families with children leave the County and the region for jobs, education, and other opportunities. While young people move away, older residents continue to move to the County and the region, drawn by its appeal as a retirement destination. These trends create an imbalanced population, with a

higher proportion of older residents than other parts of the State. The median age in Missaukee County is 43 years, compared to 39.5 years statewide. 19% of the County's residents are over the age of 65, compared to 15% of Michigan as a whole. Both the median age and the proportion of older residents in Missaukee County and the region are expected to increase at a faster rate than Michigan as a whole.

These demographic trends have

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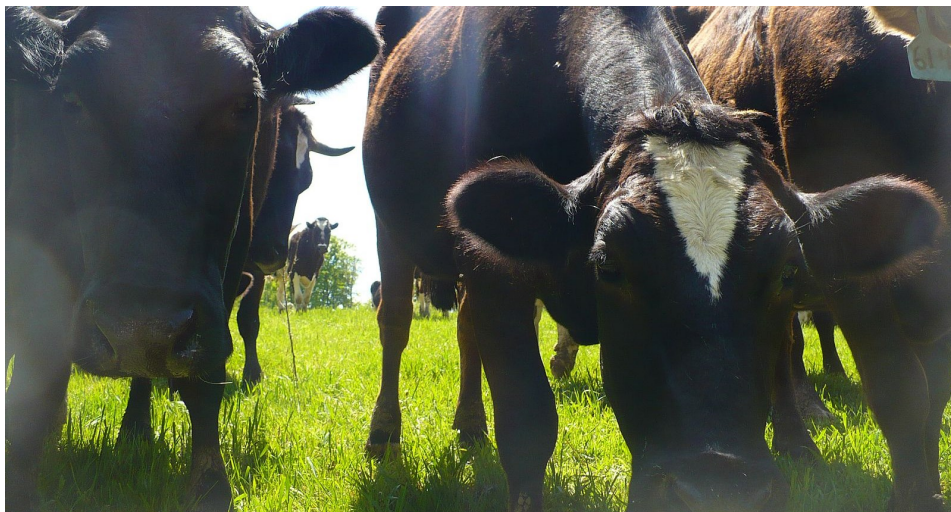
profound implications on the County's workforce and service demands. With fewer people of working age, businesses struggle to find an adequate workforce. Schools may suffer from declining enrollment and reduced funding. Housing needs and preferences shift, as household sizes shrink and one- or two-person households increase: seniors and empty nesters are more likely to look for smaller homes with fewer maintenance needs. And as the population ages, there are increasing demands on health care, emergency medical care, and other services.

Economics

Jobs in Missaukee County are concentrated in several industry sectors, with agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industries providing the largest number of jobs by a wide margin. Manufacturing; retail trade; health care and social assistance; and construction industries also provide significant numbers of employment opportunities.

Missaukee County forms a unique and important agricultural niche in Northwest Michigan's economy. While it makes up only 5% of the region's population, its agricultural economy—primarily driven by dairy and Christmas tree farms—accounts for 19% of the region's agricultural jobs, 20% of earnings, and 23% of sales.

Other economic strengths include transportation and warehousing occupations. With nearly 300 jobs



in this industry, Missaukee County accounts for 10% of the region's jobs, earnings, and sales in the sector.

Income & Housing

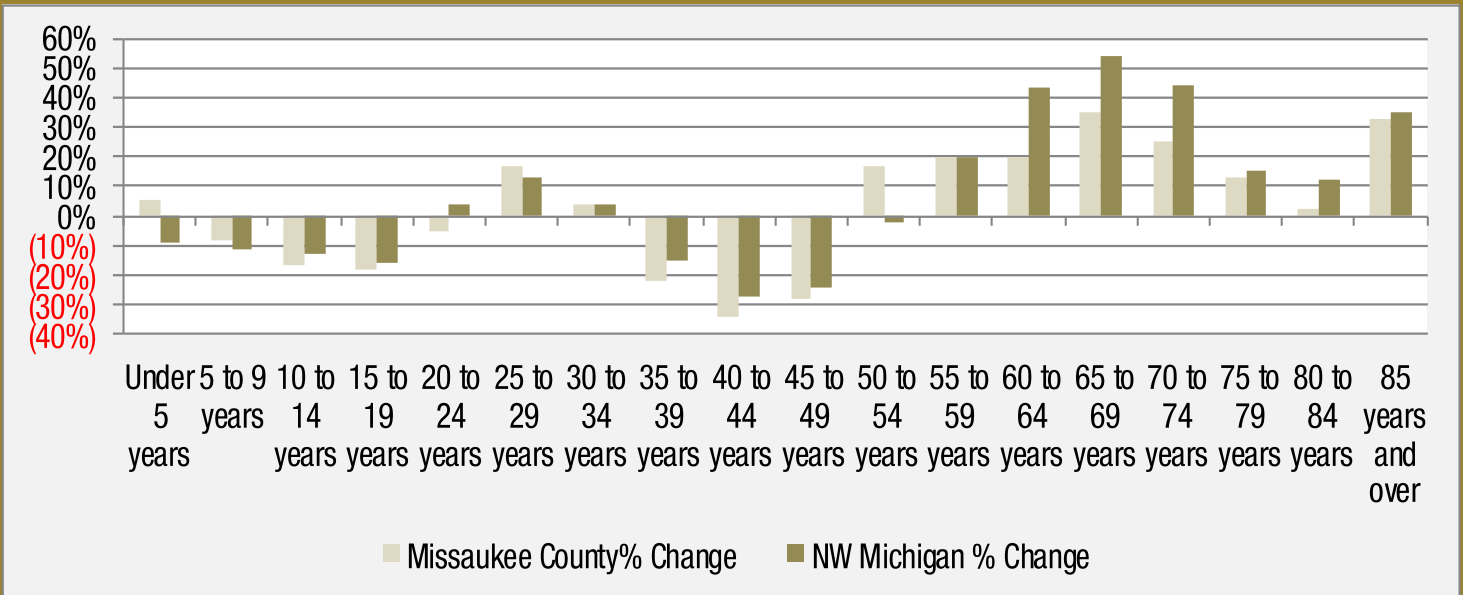
Wages in Missaukee County tend to be less than other communities within the region, with the exception of jobs in utilities, agriculture, government, transportation/warehousing/wholesale trade industries.

Incomes and wages have impacts on service needs and demands. When wages or earnings aren't enough to meet basic costs of living, demands for services are likely to increase. While the cost of living in Missaukee County is lower than in other parts of the region, measures of poverty and financial hardship, including United Way's ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) household data, nevertheless indicate that nearly half of County residents are struggling to cover the basic costs of living—including costs for housing, transportation,

and child care.

Stakeholder input stressed the impact of housing shortages in Missaukee County, which are impacting businesses, schools, and community vitality. While housing needs—particularly for rentals—are impacting households from across the income spectrum, there is an especially short supply of housing that's affordable or available year-round to a large portion of the workforce. The 2014 Missaukee County Housing Inventory showed that, with 4,200 households earning less than \$50,000 per year, only about 3,200 homes in the County were considered "affordable" to those households. A second 2014 study assessed the potential annual demand for new housing units in Missaukee County. It showed that there may be a market for a total of 67 new housing units, in Missaukee County each year through 2019, for households earning between \$19,000 and \$92,000 per year.

Population Change by Age, 2005-2015: Missaukee County & Northwest Michigan



Source: US Census/American Community Survey

Jobs, Earnings, & Sales by Industry in Missaukee County, 2015

Industry	Jobs	Earnings	Sales	Average Earnings
Utilities	<10	\$1,483,202	\$6,670,829	\$247,200
Information	27	\$603,853	\$2,782,511	\$22,365
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	56	\$747,777	\$2,205,689	\$13,353
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	65	\$1,686,211	\$4,904,394	\$25,942
Educational Services	81	\$1,782,041	\$2,587,699	\$22,001
Accommodation and Food Services	110	\$1,976,395	\$4,975,365	\$17,967
Finance and Insurance	137	\$5,405,850	\$17,392,848	\$39,459
Administrative, Support, Waste Mgmtt & Remediation Services	144	\$1,983,946	\$4,280,784	\$13,777
Wholesale Trade	152	\$8,401,408	\$22,570,755	\$55,272
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	153	\$5,061,292	\$8,313,045	\$33,080
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	231	\$5,806,333	\$24,546,544	\$25,136
Government	244	\$14,173,466	\$38,934,688	\$58,088
Transportation and Warehousing	282	\$11,941,868	\$32,707,312	\$42,347
Other Services (except Public Administration)	332	\$6,586,259	\$13,437,822	\$19,838
Construction	428	\$13,494,606	\$33,055,256	\$31,529
Health Care and Social Assistance	520	\$13,601,718	\$23,482,710	\$26,157
Retail Trade	559	\$16,558,486	\$40,031,346	\$29,622
Manufacturing	628	\$31,425,076	\$141,874,573	\$50,040
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,119	\$29,445,036	\$128,153,127	\$26,314
Total	5,274	\$172,164,824	\$552,907,297	\$32,644

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Missaukee County Housing Demand

A residential “target market analysis” was conducted by real estate consultants LandUse USA in 2014 for all counties in Northwest Michigan. The analysis analyzes demand from various demographic groups for multi-family housing types from potential “movers” both inside and outside the study area. The complete study and methodology is available online at www.networksnorthwest.org.

POTENTIAL OWNERS/RENTERS	ANNUAL MARKET DEMAND - OWNERS	ANNUAL MARKET DEMAND - RENTERS	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	% THAT ARE SINGLE-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS	MEDIAN RENT	MEDIAN HOME VALUE
Young singles	7	17	\$37,000	64%	\$550	\$89,000
Lower-income families/households	0	17	\$29,000	17%	\$525	\$92,000
Young families	0	1	\$30,500	15%	\$450	\$46,500
Low Income Gen X	0	13	\$19,000	80%	\$475	\$75,000
Low-income boomer singles/empty nesters	0	1				
Lower-income Boomers	0	2	\$34,500	80%	\$525	\$92,000
Low/moderate-income blue collar boomers	1	2	\$33,000	42%	\$455	\$75,000
Moderate-income Boomers	0	1	\$48,500	51%	\$700	\$147,000
Lower-income seniors	0	6	\$20,000	69%	\$500	\$95,000
Total	8	59				

Source: 2015 Northwest Michigan Target Market Analysis, prepared by LandUseUSA. Underlying data provided by the Internal Revenue Services; US Decennial Census; American Community Survey; and Experian Decision Analytics

ALICE: Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed

Many households are living below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), but an even greater number of households are what United Way calls ALICE – an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE households have incomes above the FPL, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities. A 2017

United Way report identifies the cost of basic needs for each county in Michigan, and the number of households earning below this amount – the ALICE Threshold.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics	Missaukee County	Michigan
Median household income	\$41,098	\$51,084
Annual household ‘survival budget’ – single adult	\$17,556	
Annual household ‘survival budget’ – 2 adults, 1 infant, 1 preschooler	\$55,608	\$56,064
Unemployment	11%	7.2%
ALICE Households	29%	25%
Poverty Households	15%	15%
Total ALICE + Poverty	44%	40%

County Services & Focus Areas

Throughout Michigan, county and local governments are facing budget challenges that are connected, in many cases, to the reduction in statewide revenue sharing. Missaukee County is no different. The County has been working for some time to balance declining revenues in a way that meets demands for services that are mandated by the State of Michigan and identified as a priority by residents and stakeholders. Opportunities to increase revenue to meet these demands are limited, due in part to the large amounts of agricultural land in the County, which is taxed at a lower rate and uncapped less frequently. Meanwhile, commercial property, which generates higher taxes, makes up a small percentage of the County's tax base, leaving taxing jurisdictions heavily dependent on residential property for revenue.

In the face of these limitations, the County has consistently exercised a fiscal accountability that has successfully addressed many of the County's budgetary priorities. As of 2018, the County has only \$170,000 in debt, leaving the capacity to borrow funds if necessary. It has also worked to address long-term costs of benefits and pensions—a significant financial challenge for



many communities statewide—and is on track to long-term solutions. It does not have additional OBER costs, which puts it at a financial advantage long-term.

Stakeholder input indicates that the County's fiscally conservative ethics are recognized and valued by citizens. Yet, residents and stakeholders continue to seek opportunities to maintain or enhance services in order to meet long-term community goals.

As such, as the County works to operate within its fiscal limitations, stakeholder input and Board discussion have identified four **strategic focus areas** that provide opportunities for the County to support community-wide goals while enhancing cost-

efficiency:

- County Services & Employees
- Facilities & Infrastructure
- Communication, Awareness, & Promotion
- Community Partnerships

Board and stakeholder input relative to each of these focus areas is summarized below. Corresponding goals and measurements are found on the following pages.

Services & Employees

The County provides and supports services that are mandated by the State of Michigan, as well as services that are considered to be “essential” to



the community's health, safety, and welfare. Services include:

- Building Codes
- Equalization
- Emergency Medical Services
- Recycling
- Register of Deeds
- Sheriff
- Soil Conservation
- Treasurer
- Veterans Affairs

County services and employees are perceived to be high-quality, efficient, collaborative, and responsive; and County departments facilitate continuous evaluation processes to ensure that services remain responsive and of high quality.

One challenge facing the County is a coming "retirement wave." As employees retire in greater numbers, and the community contends with a shrinking labor pool, resulting in a loss of institutional knowledge for the County. At the same time, changes in staffing levels provide opportunities to evaluate needs

and to facilitate operational improvements for greater efficiencies, through sharing services, re-evaluating wages/salaries, and exploring technology solutions.

Facilities & Infrastructure

Missaukee County maintains a number of facilities, including the County Building, County jail, EMS building, parks, and operational equipment. These County facilities, or "capital assets," require ongoing maintenance and improvements with budget support and oversight from the County. Some, like the County Jail, are not in need of short-term repairs. What's more, the jail provides opportunities to create revenue through agreements with other counties. Others, however, including operational systems such as HVAC, 9-1-1 dispatch, and department computer systems, are aging, and will require expenditures for deferred maintenance costs or needed upgrades.

The County has developed a capital improvements plan (CIP) to aid in budgeting and planning for these costs. As such, detailed goals and objectives relative to specific facilities and infrastructure improvements are not included in the Strategic Plan. However, any discussions relative to County Board budgetary decisions must factor in long-term capital needs and costs.

Roads and parks are not addressed in the strategic plan or the capital improvements plan. Roads are maintained by the Missaukee County Road Commission, through funding available from the State of Michigan and millage dollars. The County's parks, meanwhile, are financially self-sustaining and are addressed in the Missaukee County Recreation Plan, which provides specific action items and needs for each park.

In addition to County capital assets, stakeholder input identified long-term community needs around infrastructure and development. One potential role for the County is through incentive programs like brownfield redevelopment authorities and land bank authorities. These entities can help attract new development or investment, in part by offering financial tools to help with infrastructure and other development costs. Both brownfield redevelopment and land bank authorities are typically organized and operated at a county level.

Communication, Awareness, & Promotion

Stakeholder input points to a disconnect between citizens and County government or services, with limited engagement from citizens in County government, and a lack of awareness of County services among the public. Some of the disconnect arises from the rural nature of the County, which limits the type and amount of available services, leaving many residents to access services and amenities outside of the County.

Marketing or communications, promotion, and awareness activities can help citizens better understand what the County provides, as well as opportunities to get involved in County initiatives. At the same time, understanding residents' needs or demands for services/amenities can help the County and other stakeholders to provide the services or amenities that residents need, or to develop more cost-efficient means of meeting service needs and demands.

Awareness and communication efforts were also identified as a community priority that extends beyond the County's boundaries. The statewide policies, legislative initiatives, and related funding impacts that affect Missaukee County require sustained, ongoing dialogue with legislators

and organizations like the Michigan Association of Counties to ensure that Missaukee County's needs and priorities are "on the radar" of policy-makers statewide.

Additionally, long-term, an enhanced awareness in neighboring counties and throughout Michigan of the County's assets can build additional investment and a more diversified tax base: the County's rural character and lifestyle are seen as "quality of life" assets by many, and can attract new residents and businesses—ultimately creating additional tax revenue.

Community Support & Partnerships

Service demands are often rooted in population and economic forces that require long-term efforts like early childhood education or early intervention to address issues like abuse, neglect, poverty, and addiction. While these large, complex challenges can't be solved by one entity acting alone, community-wide efforts conducted in partnerships between multiple communities and organizations can create more meaningful impact.

Opportunities for partnerships between the County, local governments, and community organizations also create

opportunities to pool resources and save money. They also broaden the scope of available grant dollars and other revenue, encourage citizen engagement in community activities, and enhance staff capacities and efficiencies.

Missaukee County has a successful history of partnering with community stakeholders to meet local goals. Collaborative and partner-based services like the liaison officer in the schools have been effective and well-received. Other examples include intergovernmental partnerships like the County's EMS service, which is used and supported by all communities in the County.

Other opportunities for partnerships include County support for initiatives, partnerships, and grants that address health and wellness, education, and training/skill-building for current and future workforce. Support can include actions as simple as participating in collaborative groups like the Wexford-Missaukee Human Services Collaborative Body, passing a resolution of support for grants or initiatives, or assigning County representation to participate in task forces or working groups that have formed around specific topics.

Mission, Vision, & Strategic Goals

Mission

Missaukee County provides high-quality and cost-efficient essential services that support local goals and needs for the health, safety, and economic prosperity of a culturally diverse community.

Vision

Missaukee County is a vibrant, close-knit community. It offers a high quality of life and a diverse mix of services, business, agriculture, recreation, and industry that meets the needs of residents, property owners, investors, and visitors. It is widely known for its supportive community and culture, business, infrastructure, recreation and natural resources, workforce assets, and housing choices. These assets are leveraged and enhanced for greater economic opportunities through collaborative, cost-effective efforts and services supported by the County, its citizens, and stakeholders.

Focus Areas & Goals

To create cost efficiencies that will support the County's mission and achieve its vision, the County Board of Commissioners has identified goals and objectives for each of its strategic focus areas. Workplans for each goal, developed by County staff and Board members, will identify tasks associated with each objective. Measures are identified for each goal to aid the County in evaluating progress.

Services & Employees

Continually evaluate departmental operations for opportunities for efficiency, partnerships, and shared services

- Evaluate technology solutions, shared services, or consolidated solutions to meet staffing needs as appropriate
- Consider offering internships for certain projects or tasks
- Provide opportunities for and incentivize employees to offer cost-saving or efficiency suggestions
- Recognize exemplary employee service through awards and/or in newsletters, columns, etc
- Conduct a wage study to determine appropriate salaries

Measures: departmental budgets/staffing levels, technology solutions implemented, shared services implemented, # identified cost-saving solutions, completed wage study

Continually evaluate fiscal health and cost of services to identify for opportunities for increased revenue, cost savings, grant opportunities

- Conduct regular forecasting to evaluate cost of mandated and non-mandated services
- Identify and explore alternate ways of financing both mandated and non-mandated services
- Explore and consider grant opportunities

Measures: departmental cost savings, # grant applications, grant dollars received

Facilities & Infrastructure

Continue to plan for, budget, and prioritize needed capital improvements

- Update and maintain the Missaukee County Capital Improvements Plan in order to prioritize and budget for capital improvements/maintenance
- Update and maintain the Missaukee County Recreation Plan in order to anticipate parks and recreation needs and grant opportunities
- Explore opportunities to use alternative revenue sources or funds, like delinquent tax funds or grant dollars, for needed capital improvements

Measures: facilities expenses, updated capital improvements plan, updated recreation plan, alternative revenues

Support community infrastructure needs

- Explore education around and opportunities to establish brownfield redevelopment and/or land bank authorities in order to provide additional tools and resources for community infrastructure needs

Measures: # educational discussions/working sessions on brownfield/land bank authorities, Board decisions/direction on pursuing establishment of brownfield/land bank authority

Community Support & Partnerships

Facilitate partnerships between agencies and organizations within the county

- Serve as a liaison or informational resource to connect community partners to existing resources and best practices
- Participate in/support local initiatives and grant applications that address community needs and priorities
- Facilitate continued dialogue with schools to identify opportunities to collaboratively and proactively address abuse/neglect, juvenile delinquency, and other child/family needs
- Continue to offer and enhance resources and support for early intervention through positions like the juvenile probation officer and officer in schools

Measures: regular meetings with schools and other community partners, resolutions enacted, resource/best practice information in newsletters, attendance/participation in collaborative bodies

Facilitate partnerships with local governments and neighboring communities

- Provide letters or resolutions of support for local government grants or initiatives that meet community needs and priorities
- Coordinate County-wide intergovernmental meetings or summit
- Attend local government meetings to share updates and information about County services, and to learn about local government issues and initiatives

Measures: letters/resolutions of support, intergovernmental meetings, # local government meetings attended

Communication, Awareness, & Promotion

Advocate for state policies that impact County needs and issues

- Identify and become informed/engaged on priority state policies and legislative initiatives
- Enact resolutions that support community initiatives and statewide policy/legislative initiatives
- Develop and maintain relationships with legislators to ensure that County priorities are known, understood, and advanced by representatives
- Continue to engage in Michigan Association of Counties and similar groups/initiatives that advocate or raise awareness of County interests or needs

Measures: meetings with legislators/advocacy groups, resolutions enacted

Improve awareness of County roles and services

- Develop and distribute a newsletter highlighting County actions, programs, or initiatives
- Develop and maintain a social media presence
- Work with newspaper and other media to run a regular column on County activities, programs, or initiatives

Measures: development/distribution of newsletter, creation of Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/LinkedIn accounts, creation of a social media policy, publication of column

Improve awareness of County roles and services

- Identify and maintain information about volunteer/community service opportunities and needs available at the County
- Offer open house events to invite the public to learn about County activities, programs, or initiatives
- Share information on roles and activities of boards and committees through newsletters, events, or articles
- Coordinate with schools, chambers of commerce, and other organizations to connect students and citizens to County programs or initiatives for volunteer or community service opportunities
- Schedule alternate dates/times for County meetings to accommodate additional participation

Measures: events, volunteer/community service listings, alternate County meetings scheduled, regular meetings with partners, newsletter articles/columns

Appendices

Appendix A: Prioritized Workplan

Appendix B: Stakeholder Input

December 18, 2017 SWOT Analysis and Prioritization Worksheet Summary

Prioritized Workplan

Services & Employees

Goal #1: Continually evaluate departmental operations for opportunities for efficiency, partnerships, and shared services

Priority	Objective:	Tasks & Resources Needed:	Benchmarks	Start Date
7	Evaluate technology solutions, shared services, or consolidated solutions to meet staffing needs as appropriate	Survey department heads for unmet staffing/service needs; identify technology/shared service options; evaluate costs, accessibility, and training needs	technology solutions implemented; shared services implemented	Ongoing
5.6	Provide opportunities for and incentivize employees to offer cost-saving or efficiency suggestions	Work with personnel committee to explore options/budgetary needs for incentives; explore programs used in other communities; develop policy	departmental budgets; # identified cost-saving solutions	August 2018
4.8	Conduct a wage study to determine appropriate salaries	Participate in/access Networks Northwest 2018 salary survey	completed wage study; adjusted/updated salary structure	April/May 2018
3.6	Recognize exemplary employee service through awards and/or in newsletters, columns, etc	Develop policy for nomination/award process for employee recognition; assign staff to develop nomination/internal promotional material; issue press releases and promotions	employee awards/recognition	December 2018
2.8	Consider offering internships for certain projects or tasks	Survey department heads for potential internship projects/positions; develop job description; share with universities/high schools	departmental staffing levels	2019

Goal #2: Continually evaluate fiscal health and cost of services to identify opportunities for increased revenue, cost savings, and grant opportunities

Priority	Objective	Tasks & Resources Needed	Benchmarks	Start Date
5.2	Conduct regular forecasting, as part of budget process, to evaluate cost of mandated and non-mandated services	Organize/conduct meetings with partners and department heads to identify and prioritize costs and services	departmental cost savings	May 2018
4.2	Identify and explore alternate ways of financing both mandated and non-mandated services	Identify unmet financial needs; work with public, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations to identify relevant grant opportunities; network with and	departmental cost savings	Ongoing
2.8	Explore and consider grant opportunities	Identify unmet financial needs; work with public, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations to identify relevant grant opportunities; evaluate potential benefits and obligations	departmental cost savings; # grant applications; grant dollars received	Ongoing

Facilities & Infrastructure

Goal #1: Continue to plan for, budget, and prioritize needed capital improvements

Priority	Objective	Tasks & Resources Needed	Benchmarks	Target Date
3.8	Update and maintain the Missaukee County Capital Improvements Plan in order to prioritize and budget for capital improvements/maintenance	Schedule regular reviews of the CIP to evaluate progress/benchmarks; update as necessary	facilities expenses; updated capital improvements plan	March 2019
2.6	Explore opportunities to use alternative revenue sources or funds, like delinquent tax funds or grant dollars, for needed capital improvements	Invite local/regional/state stakeholders to Board meetings for informational presentations; identify opportunities and potential issues; identify action steps or implementation needs	alternative revenues	Ongoing
1.8	Update and maintain the Missaukee County Recreation Plan in order to anticipate parks and recreation needs and grant opportunities	Schedule regular reviews and begin updates of the Recreation Plan every 4 years	facilities expenses; updated recreation plan	As needed

Goal #2: Support community infrastructure needs

Priority	Objective	Tasks & Resources Needed	Benchmarks	Target Date
1.8	Explore education around and opportunities to establish brownfield redevelopment and/or land bank authorities in order to provide additional tools and resources for community infrastructure needs	Invite local/regional/state stakeholders to Board meetings for informational presentations; identify opportunities and potential issues; identify action steps or implementation needs	# educational discussions/working sessions on brownfield/land bank authorities, Board decisions/direction on pursuing establishment of brownfield/land bank authority	Ongoing

Community Support & Partnerships

Goal #1: Facilitate partnerships between agencies and organizations within the County

Priority	Objective	Tasks & Resources Needed	Benchmarks	Target Date
5	Participate in/support local initiatives and grant applications that address community needs and priorities	Invite community stakeholders to share updates/information at Board meetings for discussion/ identification of opportunities for participation and support	resolutions enacted	Ongoing
5	Facilitate continued dialogue with schools to identify opportunities to collaboratively and proactively address abuse/neglect, juvenile delinquency, and other child/family needs	Invite school representatives to attend County Board meetings for regular updates; participate in school board meetings/events; schedule one-on-one meetings with school officials as necessary	regular meetings with schools; attendance/ participation in collaborative bodies	Ongoing
4.8	Continue to offer and enhance resources and support for early intervention through positions like the juvenile probation officer and officer in schools		resolutions enacted	Ongoing
4.4	Serve as a liaison or informational resource to connect community partners to existing resources and best practices	Assign Commissioners to attend community meetings/events for reports to full Board	regular meetings with community partners; resource/best practice information in newsletters; attendance/ participation in	Ongoing

Goal #2: Facilitate partnerships with local governments and neighboring communities

Priority	Objective	Tasks & Resources Needed	Benchmarks	Target Date
3.8	Attend local government meetings to share updates and information about County services, and to learn about local government issues and initiatives	Provide local meeting schedules to Commissioners by district; include Commissioner updates on local government meetings/news on Board agendas	# local government meetings attended	Ongoing
3	Coordinate County-wide intergovernmental meetings or summit	Solicit input from local governments/stakeholders on priority topics and/or work with County MTA chapter; develop draft agenda, topics, speakers; identify dates and venues; develop and distribute communications and promotions	intergovernmental meetings	Ongoing
2	Provide letters or resolutions of support for local government grants or initiatives that meet community needs and priorities	Invite local governments and neighboring counties to share updates/information at Board meetings for discussion/ identification of opportunities for participation and support	letters/resolutions of support	Ongoing

Communication, Awareness, & Promotion

Goal #1: Advocate for state policies that impact County needs and issues

Priority	Objective	Tasks & Resources Needed	Benchmarks	Start Date
8.4	Continue to engage in Michigan Association of Counties and similar groups/initiatives that advocate or raise awareness of County interests or needs		meetings with advocacy groups	Ongoing
8.2	Identify and become informed/engaged on priority state policies and legislative initiatives	Include regular agenda items on legislative initiatives for education, discussion, and determination of County position	agenda items related to state policies and legislative initiatives	Ongoing
7.2	Enact resolutions that support community initiatives and statewide policy/legislative initiatives		resolutions enacted	Ongoing
6	Develop and maintain relationships with legislators to ensure that County priorities are known, understood, and advanced by representatives	Attend legislator office hours; invite to public meetings; share information and newsletters with legislators and staff; work with partners to organize/attend legislative forums on County priorities	meetings with legislators	Ongoing

Goal #2: Improve awareness of County roles and services

Priority	Objective	Tasks & Resources Needed	Benchmarks	Start Date
7.6	Work with newspaper and other media to run a regular column or letters to the editor on County activities, programs, or initiatives	Connect with Missaukee Sentinel, Cadillac News; identify story/content ideas; assign staff to develop draft columns	publication of column	May/June 2018
6.4	Develop and maintain a social media presence	Assign staff or intern to research/develop social media policy; develop social media plan, including staff assignments; establish Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn pages; post content	creation of Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/LinkedIn accounts	Sep-18
4.2	Develop and distribute a newsletter highlighting County actions, programs, or initiatives	Contact taxing jurisdictions to identify options for format and distribution; identify programs/activities to highlight; assign staff to develop draft newsletter articles	development/distribution of newsletter	Tax mailing dates

Goal #3: Improve awareness of County roles and services

Priority	Objective	Tasks & Resources Needed	Benchmarks	Target Date
7.4	Share information on roles and activities of boards and committees through newsletters, events, or articles	Develop information overview on County Boards and committees	newsletter articles/columns	As necessary
7.2	Offer open house events to invite the public to learn about County activities, programs, or initiatives	Meet/work with department heads and Chamber of Commerce to identify open house goals, programming, and schedule; assign staff/interns to develop and promote communications	events; regular meetings with partners	August 2018
5.8	Coordinate with schools, chambers of commerce, and other organizations to connect students and citizens to County programs or initiatives for volunteer or community service opportunities	Develop information overview on County volunteer or community service opportunities; schedule meetings with partners to discuss/identify connection opportunities	volunteering/ community service listings	May 2018
5.2	Schedule alternate dates/times for County meetings to accommodate additional participation	Identify alternate dates; issue press release/distribute announcement to local governments, media, and stakeholders	alternate County meetings scheduled	December 2018
4.4	Identify and maintain information about volunteer/community service opportunities and needs available at the County	Meet/work with department heads to identify volunteer/community service needs		Ongoing

Missaukee County Strategic Plan

December 18, 2017 Stakeholder Input Summary

Strengths

Quality Services

County services are perceived to be high-quality, efficient, and responsive. Everyone works well together. Specific departments that were mentioned include the Road Commission, Parks, Parks, and the Commission on Aging.

The Sheriff's Department puts citizens front and center. Collaborative/partner-based services like the liaison offer are effective and well-received. The jail provides opportunities to create revenue through agreements with other counties. The facility itself is in good condition and doesn't need repairs short-term.

The Conservation District/recycling services and staff are collaborative.

There is good representation from diverse interests on the County Board.

Fiscal Conservatism

The County has only \$170,000 in debt, leaving the capacity to borrow funds if necessary.

The County's fiscally conservative ethics are highly valued by citizens.

The County is addressing benefits and pensions, and is on track to long-term solutions. It does not have additional OBER costs, which puts it at a financial advantage long-term.

High-quality EMS service is fully self-sustaining, not requiring any General Fund dollars. It's used by all communities in the County, as an example of intergovernmental service.

Supportive Community & Culture

High-quality schools are a model for other communities.

The County's culture is close-knit, friendly, supportive, and caring. People work well together because they know each other.

There's no community foundation, but County residents are giving and supportive of the community.

The County recognizes and supports its economic strengths.

Weaknesses

Service Costs

Delinquent child care costs are not predictable or optional, making it hard for the County to budget appropriately.

9-1-1 costs are coming out of the General Fund. The system is aging and will need improvements.

Service Demands

Limited and/or aging infrastructure – including roads, sewer, high speed Internet, and the electrical grid – will require repair and upgrades.

The rural character of the County makes it difficult to provide essential services and amenities. Surrounding counties provide some services to fill gaps, meaning the County loses dollars to surrounding counties that are able to provide them.

Limited Revenue

The County's tax-base is heavily dependent on residential property, as agricultural land is taxed at a lower rate and uncapped less frequently. Commercial property, which generates higher taxes, is limited in the County.

The County has limited capital and limited ability to increase capital.

Grants are not perceived well by the community, creating a reluctance to pursue alternative funding opportunities.

Governance & Community Culture

Citizens don't participate/engage in County or local government at the level desired.

There is a resistance to change among decision-makers.

There is a limited awareness outside of the County about our assets and services.

If development increases, the lack of zoning could be a problem long-term.

OPPORTUNITIES

Partnerships

Partnerships between the County and local governments create opportunities to pool resources and save money.

Early intervention addresses issues – like abuse, neglect, poverty, and addiction – that can impact workforce and service costs. Support for initiatives, partnerships, and grants for health and wellness, school services, and training/skill-building for current and future workforce can be a long-term strategy for those issues

Partnerships with large employers can foster solutions to bigger issues like transportation and housing needs.

Awareness & Engagement

People choose to live in the County and access services elsewhere. If we're able to determine what services/amenities they need/want, we can provide that locally.

Encourage civic engagement/involvement.

Marketing, promotion, and awareness activities can help citizens understand what the County provides.

Increasing Business/Revenue Base

Partnering with businesses in other communities may help to attract and expand business opportunities.

Provide incentives (i.e. tax, land, codes, marketing) for commercial/business and residential development. The County may be able to offer other incentives through tools like county wide brownfield redevelopment authority.

High traffic volumes and visibility create opportunities for business on M-66/M-55.

A lack of higher-end lodging, combined with recreational assets, creates new business opportunities.

The County's rural character and lifestyle is seen as an asset by many, and can attract new residents. Additionally, its scenic beauty, location, trails, parks, and natural resources, are under-utilized and could be enhanced. Identifying, enhancing, and marketing these unique assets could attract new business and residents.

Threats

Operational Constraints

Many employees are retiring, resulting in a loss of institutional knowledge for the County.

Many residents don't understand what the County does or provides.

Fiscal Constraints

There are limited options to increase the County's tax base.

A focus on short-term budgeting and low tax rates can result in a loss of long-term visioning and strategy.

Many of the County's service costs – including delinquent child care costs – and factors impacting a reliable workforce are linked to long-term issues like the abuse and neglect cycle.

Environmental Constraints

The County is medically underserved, making it difficult for residents to access services; and limited funding opportunities for EMS and other services makes it harder to provide them.

The County has a small population and small workforce. Attracting additional residents/workforce may be complicated by shortages of quality housing that's affordable to the workforce.

Shopping and services in the County are limited, impacting the County's tax revenues and attractiveness to new residents and businesses.

Healthcare costs for individuals and businesses, as well as government, are high.

High Priority Budget and Service Items

- Public Safety
- Look for opportunities to increase county revenues
- Advocacy – contact state legislature on key issues to increase state funding/support of county
- Collaborate with schools & cities/townships to promote new investment
- Youth training
- Building partnerships
- Collaboration

Strategic Plan Worksheet: *Focus Areas & Future Roles*

What are the top 3 issues facing Missaukee County right now?

- Workforce housing (6)
- Transportation (3)
- Economic development (lack of) and promotion
- Declining workforce/skilled employees (4)
- Expanding current markets
- Processing
- Health care/senior care
- Funding for 9-1-1 and EMS service
- High-speed Internet
- Agricultural workers for tree farms and dairy farms
- Drug abuse
- Lack of jobs
- Population
- Rural – housing, internet, etc.
- Lack of jobs – have to travel

What do you see as local and County roles in addressing those priority issues?

- Enhanced DDA
- Tax abatement
- Creative marketing
- Enhancing Chamber role
- Opportunity to address major issues as a county government to promote community and economic development
- Promote/support growth in building of homes, apartments, and businesses
- Attract more processing – dairy especially
- Attract for recreation, quiet areas
- CTC – really support this
- Support initiatives brought to them by local boards and commissions
- Bolster existing entities to make best use of their resources
- Dispell the idea of “we have always done it this way” and “not broken don’t fix”

- Look at new source of funding for 9-1-1
- Facilitate/partner for improved housing options and opportunities
- Transportation/public transit would help with housing and transportation
- Creating/supporting a plan for County that includes growth in jobs, housing, and workforce. Addressing transportation issues.

What resources does or can the County provide in those efforts?

- In-kind – personnel, venues, materials, expertise
- County agreed to put public transportation on the ballot – failed. Also has before had a broadband committee for high-speed internet. But how to do without increasing financial hardship County is already facing. DDAs?
- Next – strategic plan
- Collaborate on grant initiatives
- Consider retaining tax foreclose land (that which could be developed commercially) versus selling – short term gain/long term loss
- Engage and strengthen boards and commissions with shared learning opportunities and resource options
- MSU
- Staff expertise
- Housing commission, tax abatements/incentives, Planning Commission

Missaukee County Strategic Plan Worksheet

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