

Strategic Plan  
and  
2022-2023 Business Plan

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John Shay, County Administrator



Ottawa County  
Where You Belong.®

# Board of Commissioners

## Back Row (Left to Right):

Doug R. Zylstra – District 3

Joseph S. Baumann – District 2

Allen Dannenberg – District 4, Vice-Chair

Randall J. Meppelink – District 5

Francisco C. Garcia – District 1

Kyle J. Terpstra – District 6

Matthew R. Fenske – District 11, Chair

## Front Row (Left to Right):

Philip D. Kuyers – District 9

Roger A. Bergman – District 10

Gregory J. DeJong – District 8

James H. Holtvluwer – District 7



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# Strategic Planning Process Summary

*Ottawa County*, the seventh-largest county in Michigan, is a beautiful community of 296,200 people located along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The government that serves the community is comprised of approximately 1,200 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 June 24, 2022, to review the current Strategic Plan and create the Business Plan for fiscal year 2023. This involved a review of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing the County, a confirmation of major goals and the development and ranking of objectives. After the Board established draft objectives, Administration assigned resources to each objective and developed outcome measures which will indicate success in completing the plan's goals. The results of the process follow.



# Strategic Planning Components

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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.



*A formal statement of organizational values was developed to clearly identify the principles upon which the organization is based and 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 *Rule of Law* in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to work within, uphold, support, and impartially enforce the law.

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

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

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

We recognize the importance of *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* in the accomplishment of our mission and hold it as a basic value to proactively engage and understand a variety of perspectives across all human differences. We seek to ensure respectful treatment and fair access to opportunities and resources so all may thrive and achieve their full potential. We believe every person's voice adds value and contributes to the wellbeing and stability of our growing community.

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

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



# What do we want to do?



## Goals

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



# 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 balance budget.			
Budget timeline is on pace to meet established deadlines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information to the Board necessary to make key decisions in order to adopt the budget by the end of September.</li> <li>• Annually adopt the Capital Improvement Plan, identifying and prioritizing projects and the funding to pay for it.</li> <li>• Annually review millage rates during the budget process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• Fiscal Services</li> </ul>	9/30/2023
Adopt strategies to address remaining pension and retiree health liabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to evaluate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> <li>• Fiscal Services</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> </ul>	ongoing
Maintain zero percent health insurance increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify strategies to contain the cost of health benefits, including health plan design, and bidding out our health plan to the market.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> <li>• Fiscal Services</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> </ul>	ongoing
Identify financial threats and approve strategies to mitigate those threats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review department fees on a rotating 2-to-3-year schedule</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> <li>• Fiscal Services</li> </ul>	ongoing
Maintain the health of the Insurance Authority while investing funds for projects that lower County liabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCIA balance at healthy levels</li> <li>• Significant investment made to lower liability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> <li>• Fiscal Services</li> </ul>	ongoing

# Goal 1: To maintain and improve the strong financial position of the County

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

Maintain legislative positions with associated talking points that can be used with legislators, the public and other stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue quarterly GCSI reports at Board meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> </ul>	ongoing
Coordinate legislative actions with our lobbyist and the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain communication with legislators, GCSI and MAC</li> <li>Legislation action plan and reporting are maintained monthly and reported to Planning and Policy Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> </ul>	ongoing
Meet with legislators to continue and enhance relationships and County influence in State decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue hosting biannual Legislative Forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> </ul>	ongoing

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

Maintain a balanced budget with pro-active strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FY2024 Budget will be balanced in September 2023</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> <li>Fiscal Services</li> </ul>	9/30/2023
Sustain Aaa bond rating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present high-quality information to bond rating agencies</li> <li>Continue communication with bond rating agencies to maintain top ratings</li> <li>Financing for Family Justice Center was successful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> <li>Fiscal Services</li> </ul>	ongoing



# Goal 2: To contribute to 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.

<p>Collaborate with community partners to address the shortage of affordable workforce housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with support of Housing Next in collaboration with County Housing Commission</li> <li>Evaluate using ARPA funds for affordable housing projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> <li>Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>Facilitate work with stakeholders to plan for completion of M-231.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue work on M-231 terminus point with one of two parcels purchased</li> <li>Discussion with MDOT continues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> <li>Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>Maintain regular communication and the relationship with the Ottawa County Road Commission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue scheduling quarterly meetings with OCRC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> <li>Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>Continue work to facilitate and support a countywide approach and contribute to economic development in the County.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue full participation with Lakeshore Advantage</li> <li>Countywide public transportation continues to be studied</li> <li>Continue to improve countywide broadband access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> <li>Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>Recognize and support the role of agriculture in our economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with comprehensive farmland preservation strategy based on countywide survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> <li>Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>

# Goal 2: To contribute to long-term economic, social and environmental health of the County

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

<p>Address current issues, including the opioid epidemic, suicide rates, and funding/provisions of mental health services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to link mental health services to social, criminal justice, law enforcement and education systems through CCBHC award</li> <li>• Evaluate best uses for opioid settlement funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> <li>• Community Mental Health</li> <li>• Courts</li> <li>• Prosecutor’s Office</li> <li>• Public Health</li> <li>• Sheriff’s Office</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>Provide for the public safety and health of residents in the County through the Department of Public Health and Community Mental Health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ottawa remains 2<sup>nd</sup> healthiest county in the State</li> <li>• Increasing demand for CMH services continues</li> <li>• Expanding Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) to allow CMH/Sheriff’s Office personnel to respond to mental health calls</li> <li>• Continue to provide for public safety in the County through the work of the Sheriff, Prosecutor, and Courts</li> <li>• Hire new health officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Mental Health</li> <li>• Public Health</li> <li>• Sheriff’s Office</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>Walk the talk of our vision “Where You Belong” by continuing the work of ensuring that the County is a welcoming place to support a globally diverse workforce in our community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Community of Practice (LCoP) with local municipalities is completing final phase of internal surveys and beginning their action plans</li> <li>• Diversity Forum is scheduled for October 27</li> <li>• Implementation of DE&amp;I equity toolkits on hold due to staff shortage in DEI Dept</li> <li>• Partnering with Family Justice Center and CMH/CIT program on accessibility and cultural sensitivity in service delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> <li>• DEI Office</li> <li>• Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>

# Goal 2: To contribute to long-term economic, social and environmental health of the County

Objective 3: Consider initiatives that contribute to the environmental health and sustainability of the County and its residents.			
Implement the Comprehensive Groundwater Management Strategies Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing state-funded groundwater monitoring network</li> <li>Collaborating with community stakeholders to enhance new development practices/ordinances and to embrace water conservation techniques</li> <li>Retain OC Groundwater Board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	ongoing
Pursue deployment of coordinated countywide future land use vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursuing coordinated land-use growth strategy for County in collaboration with local units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	12/31/2022
Support the work of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Parks Foundation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing partnerships with stakeholders to promote the Ottawa County Parks</li> <li>Developing comprehensive strategic planning process to update the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan to prepare for 2026 millage renewal campaign</li> <li>Support the Parks Foundation campaign goals once established by feasibility study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parks and Recreation</li> </ul>	ongoing
Support the Agricultural Preservation Board by discussing options to more aggressively pursue farmland preservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursuing and implementing new pragmatic tools for farmland preservation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	ongoing

# Goal 3: 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.			
Provide regular updates to the Board regarding communication strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue annual updates on GovDelivery and social media citizen communication metrics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> </ul>	ongoing
Consider and evaluate new opportunities and methods of communications with stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners continue to attend local meetings</li> <li>Continue bi-annual distribution of The Ottawa Way countywide newsletter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> </ul>	ongoing

# Goal 3: To maintain and enhance communication with citizens, employees, and other stakeholders

Objective 2: Maximize communication with citizens.			
Provide education on County's role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supply talking points for Commissioners on various topics for use when interacting with the public and other stakeholders</li> <li>Continue to provide timely updates on key issues and projects with bi-weekly Administrator's Digest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> </ul>	ongoing
Enhance engagement with citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue application of GovDelivery through additional departmental topics</li> <li>Maintain exchange of information through Facebook, YouTube and Instagram</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> </ul>	ongoing
Continue to improve miOttawa.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue seeking opportunities for virtual access</li> <li>Preserve public comment portal with biweekly report to commissioners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> </ul>	ongoing
Strengthen trust in government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to stream and record Board of Commissioner, Finance &amp; Administration, Planning &amp; Policy, Health &amp; Human Services and Talent &amp; Recruitment meetings for public viewing</li> <li>Maintain and enhance elections transparency with programs such as Step into Elections and other communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> <li>Clerk's Office</li> </ul>	Ongoing

# Goal 3: To maintain and enhance communication with citizens, employees, and other stakeholders

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, GovDelivery and all-staff emails.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular employee surveys will continue via emailed Qualtrics survey</li> <li>Continue support for departments to utilize SharePoint/Office 365 to continually share project activities and statuses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> <li>Human Resources</li> </ul>	ongoing
Continue brown bag lunches and other information sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustain in-person brown bag lunches at each campus</li> <li>Continue the Labor-Management Cooperation Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> </ul>	ongoing

Objective 4: Evaluate communication with other key stakeholders.			
Meet with community leaders on a regular basis, increasing the involvement of Commissioners within the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with participation in chamber functions, LAUP, LEDA, Model Communities, Minority Business Awards, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> <li>DEI Office</li> </ul>	ongoing
Continue communications with local units of government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry on use of GovDelivery to communicate with local units on key points and projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator</li> </ul>	Ongoing

# Goal 4: To continually improve the County's organization and services

## Objective 1: Conduct activities and maintain systems to continually improve to gain efficiencies and improve effectiveness.

<p>Develop and incorporate systems of creativity (continuous improvement and innovation) for all employees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Kata and Design Thinking workshops for staff</li> <li>• Sustain Creativity Playbook webpage as resource on Employee Portal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>Explore possible uses of artificial intelligence (AI) in County operation and service provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain lobby kiosk at Fillmore Administration Building and self-service kiosks at the Fillmore Clerk's Office</li> <li>• Installing court kiosks at various locations throughout County</li> <li>• IT has deployed the Microsoft AI Suite and is working with Chatbot and Natural Language processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> <li>• Circuit Court</li> <li>• Innovation and Technology</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>

# Goal 4: To continually improve the County's organization and services

Objective 2: Continue to perform program evaluations and implement outcome-based performance measurement systems.			
Conduct organizational efficiency/structure reviews and program evaluations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue program evaluation with internal departments, and external entities on a fee-for-service basis, to provide evaluations and recommendations for enhanced, cost-effective service delivery to citizens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	ongoing
Improve performance measurement systems and benchmarks relative to budgeted resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review outcome-based updates from each department to include in Performance Outlines for use in the Budget Book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	ongoing
Maintain and improve dashboards and other reports to increase transparency and demonstrate outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain performance dashboard by annually updating 19 datasets</li> <li>Continue to collect residential, commercial and construction activity from local units</li> <li>Maintain annual population estimates</li> <li>Maintain monthly unemployment statistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> </ul>	ongoing



# Goal 4: To continually improve the County's organization and services

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

<p>Develop approaches to attract and retain talent, including elements such as competitive wages, benefits packages, and flexible work environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topyx will continue to be utilized for employee training</li> <li>• Continue to review wage and benefit levels to maximize attraction and retention of talent</li> <li>• Preserve employee tuition reimbursement</li> <li>• Identify succession planning method</li> <li>• Coordinate with OAISD to provide work-based learning positions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>Continue to develop approaches to expand and retain a diverse workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to provide Cultural Intelligence training for staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEI Office</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>

## Objective 4: Examine opportunities for increased cooperation and collaboration with local government and other partners.

<p>Evaluate possibilities for service collaboration and make cost-effective services available to units of government.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to extend land-use data and evaluation services to local units and non-profits</li> <li>• Assessing services will continue to be provided to 5 local units and offered to others</li> <li>• Continue to provide public safety services through 26 contracts with townships, cities and schools within Ottawa County.</li> <li>• Continue community-oriented policing through collaboration with local elected officials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> <li>• Dept. of Strategic Impact</li> <li>• Equalization Department</li> <li>• Sheriff's Office</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>Continue to improve culture of collaboration and teamwork among County departments/offices/agencies/courts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdepartmental work team emphasis continues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator</li> </ul>	<p>ongoing</p>



# John Shay

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